

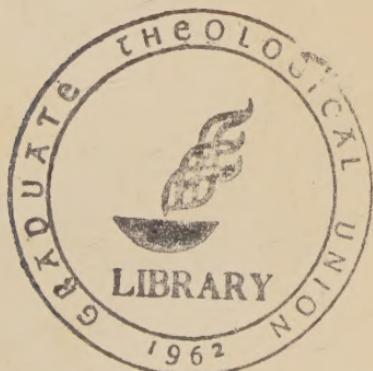




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COMMENTARY
ON THE
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN



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REVELATION OF ST. JOHN

BY THE

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36 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON

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P R E F A C E.

A REVERED friend, now in heaven, whose counsel and encouragement have greatly lightened my labours, was of opinion with me that the Revelation, which is peculiarly a book for the New Church, was less studied by New Church people than its great importance demands. We thought that if the substance of the *Apocalypse Revealed* and the *Apocalypse Explained* were cast in a somewhat different mould, and presented in an accommodated form, a book might be produced that would serve as an introduction to the perusal and study of these great works. The present volume is the result of an attempt to effect this object. It has been my aim to draw out the practical lessons of the various incidents of this mysterious book more directly than it was consistent with Swedenborg's purpose to do. I have also dwelt at greater length on the bright than on the dark side of the magnificent Vision of the Apocalyptic Seer, as unfolded by the Seer of the New Jerusalem, without, however, designedly leaving either the meaning obscure or the lessons uncertain of those parts which have been more briefly treated. The explanation of the address to the seven churches I owe to the late Rev. Samuel Noble, whose discourses on that subject have been placed at my disposal by the congregation of which he was the distinguished minister. I have only, in conclusion, to express my earnest desire that the work may in some measure serve the purpose which I have had in view in preparing it.

INTRODUCTION.

No part of the Sacred Scripture has been the subject of such deep and anxious study as the Book of Revelation, and none has received so many and such various interpretations. This may be accounted for by the nature of the book itself. At once prophetic and enigmatic, it gives the greatest stimulus to human curiosity, and affords the widest scope for human ingenuity. The variety and uncertainty of the expositions it has received arise from one cause: John has been to Christians what Moses was to the Jews, a veiled prophet. “Moses put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart” (2 Cor. iii. 13-15). That which was abolished, to the end of which the children of Israel could not steadfastly look, was the Israelitish dispensation. That which is abolished, to the end of which Christians cannot look, is the Christian dispensation. By the Christian dispensation we do not of course mean Christianity. This will never end, but will continue to increase in strength and glory from generation to generation; but the first dispensation of the church passes away, to be succeeded by another and a better. As the Israelitish dispensation was abolished by the First Coming of Christ, the Christian dispensation is abolished by His Second Coming. Here is the grand mistake of Christians and of Christian commentators: they have been looking for the Coming of the Lord as the signal for the destruction of the world. The end of the age (*αιών*) which our Lord’s disciples inquired after, and which He encouraged them to expect, has been converted by their successors into the end of the world. True, the Lord’s description of the end of the age or dispensation, and of His Second Coming, might lead the mere literalist to understand Him to predict the end of the material world. The sun is to be darkened, the moon is not to give her light, and the stars are to fall from heaven; and heaven and earth themselves are to pass away. But how is

it that men who are supposed to be acquainted with the figurative language of Scripture, and who know that similar predictions had been previously fulfilled, have understood and continue to understand all this literally? It is because their minds were blinded; for until this day there remaineth the veil untaken away in the reading of the New Testament. This veil is done away in Christ—at His Second Coming. The event has given the interpretation. Its previous concealment was the Lord's permission. No prophecy can be clearly understood before the time of its fulfilment. No church can look steadfastly to its own end. This is no cause of reproach. It is as necessary as it is natural. The Lord works out His own wise and beneficent ends in ways that are known only to Himself; and which we would only interfere with by knowing. The true interpretation of the book is now known, because the Second Coming of the Lord has already taken place. The event has explained the prediction, and thus revealed the mystery. The Second Coming of the Lord, as will be shown in the explanation of the book, is not a personal appearance in the clouds of our atmosphere, but a spiritual event, effected by the revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word, in which the Lord has made Himself visible to the minds of men, in the power and great glory of His own Divine Humanity. He comes to establish anew His kingdom upon earth. The first Christian dispensation is meant by the earth and the heaven that fled away from the face of Him that sat upon the throne; and the second Christian dispensation is meant by the new heaven and the new earth that John afterwards beheld. The New Jerusalem, which he saw coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, is the appropriate Scripture emblem of the New Church, as a dispensation of truth and love.

Commentators having been in error respecting the leading events of the prophecy; they could not but be mistaken regarding the nature of its subordinate parts. The Revelation has been generally supposed to give a continuous history of the church from its beginning. This, however, is a mistake. It describes the state of the church at the time of its end. But it describes the state of the church, as it appeared, not in the natural, but in the spiritual world. That part of the spiritual world in which the manifestations of its state took place is the middle region, or world of spirits, into which all souls enter, and where they remain, some for a shorter, some for a longer period, before they pass into heaven or hell. There, also, all judgment takes place. There, and not in the natural world, was set a great white throne; and there

the dead, small and great, stood before Him who sat upon it, and were judged every one according to his works. A general judgment takes place at the end of every general dispensation. Indeed, the general judgment brings the dispensation to an end. And when the dispensation is abolished, a new dispensation commences. All that is related in the Revelation previous to the judgment is descriptive of the preparation for it. And all that is related after the judgment is descriptive of the new order of things which succeeds, when the former things have passed away. This being the case, it is evident that no explanation of the vision of St. John could have been given, except by one who was not only mentally enlightened to understand the Divine and spiritual subjects of which the Revelation treats, but whose spiritual sight was opened to behold the things which exist in the other life. Only by one thus qualified to reveal the secrets contained in the vision of St. John could the Apocalypse be laid open, as it now is in the writings of the Lord's servant, Emanuel Swedenborg.

THE REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

1. THIS book is announced as *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. The word here translated Revelation occurs, in its substantive and verbal form, in numerous instances in the New Testament, and is variously rendered: Revelation (Rom. ii. 5); manifestation (viii. 9); appearing (1 Peter i. 7); coming (1 Cor. i. 7); enlightening (Luke ii. 32). It literally means, to disclose what is hidden, to discover what is concealed. "There is nothing covered that shall not be *revealed*" (Luke xii. 2). It is therefore appropriately employed to express the manifestation of iniquity in the last days, and the revelation or appearing of the Lord at His Second Coming. "The day of Christ shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be *revealed*. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be *revealed*, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 3, 7, 8). "The Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God" (i. 7, 8). But He who comes as a consuming fire to the wicked, comes as a refining fire to the righteous. To them it is said, "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the *revelation* of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 7, 13). These passages show both the meaning and application of the word. The *Revelation discloses* or *reveals* the state of the church, or of religion, as it would be in the last days, when dark-

ened by error and corrupted by evil, and the coming of the Lord to restore it. The Revelation, it is true, requires itself to be revealed. But all prophecy needs interpretation. Future events are known to God only. He foretells them, to keep alive faith in His promises and dependence on His providence ; but not until the time of their fulfilment is the true import of His prophecies revealed. And He who is the Revelator must also be the Interpreter. The Lord gives His revelations through His servants ; and as the revelation comes through a chosen medium, so does the interpretation. “God is His own interpreter.”

The Revelation of Jesus Christ first of all reveals Himself. “Light is that which doth make manifest.” But that which manifests all else manifests itself. This book completes and perfects the revealed Word of God, and it is eminently the Revelation of Jesus Christ, as the God and Saviour of men, the Builder and Maker of the city which hath twelve foundations—the last and best Dispensation of the Church on earth, the holy city New Jerusalem. The Gospel reveals Jesus chiefly as He appeared among men in His state of humiliation ; the Apocalypse reveals Him as He appears among angels, and as by the eye of faith He is to be seen by men, in His state of exaltation. The Gospel therefore describes the Lord as manifested in the flesh, and to the church of His First Advent ; the Apocalypse describes Him as manifested in the spirit, and to the church of His Second Advent.

This book is further announced as the Revelation of Jesus Christ *which God gave unto Him*. Though specified in this one instance, this mode of revelation is not peculiar to the Apocalypse, but is common to all the books which constitute *The Word*. All are the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and all were given unto Him by God. This does not imply that God and Jesus are two Persons. We cannot conceive of one Divine Person giving a revelation to another Divine Person in all respects equal with Himself. But when we understand God and Jesus to be the names of two distinct essentials of the Deity, the statement is intelligible and clear, and the truth it expresses is seen to be highly important and beautifully instructive. Jesus, as the Eternal Word or Wisdom of God, is the immediate Author of Revelation, as He is of Creation and Redemption. But besides the Divine Wisdom, there is another essential of the Deity, in which Revelation as well as Creation has its origin. That other essential is Divine Love. In all that the Almighty does His Love is the moving cause and His Wisdom is the efficient cause. The Love of God is that *from* which all things exist ; the Wisdom of God is that *by* which all things exist. “To us there

is but one God, the Father, *from whom* are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *by whom* are all things" (1 Cor. viii. 6). "He is before all things, and *by* Him all things consist" (Col. i. 17). This law of Divine action our Lord Himself teaches in the Gospel,—"I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in *Me*, He doeth the works" (John v. 30, xiv. 10). True, the Lord spake this with immediate reference to His Humanity, as dependent on His indwelling Divinity. But this makes no real difference; for the Humanity of the Lord was the *Word made flesh*. And whether manifested in flesh or not, the Word could do nothing and say nothing of itself, but from the Divine Love that dwelt eternally within it. As Love is in Wisdom, and reveals and manifests itself by Wisdom, so does the Father in the Son, so does God in Christ. Therefore there is a most sublime and instructive truth expressed in the declaration, that the revelation that Jesus gave to John He Himself received from God. The truth is this: The prophecy which the Lord Jesus was about to deliver to His chosen servant came from His Eternal Divinity through His Divine Humanity, from His infinite Love through His infinite Wisdom—a prophecy, therefore, which reveals the Lord's Divinity and Humanity, His Love and Wisdom, distinctly and unitedly, to His Church, and through the Church to the whole human race.

The revelation which God gave to Jesus was *to show unto His servants things that must shortly come to pass*. It appears from this that the prophecy was intended for the members of the Church, or rather for those of them who, amidst the general defection, should be found steadfast in the faith, serving the Lord in singleness of mind. According to the spiritual meaning of the term, the servants of the Lord are the faithful, or those who serve Him in faith. But as there is no faith without love, and no faith and love without works, faith that worketh by love is that which makes men the Lord's true servants. These are the servants to whom this revelation is immediately addressed. They only are interested in the subject of which it treats, and they only are capable of receiving the light which enables the mind to understand it. Unto the faithful servants of the Lord only can this revelation *show the things which must shortly come to pass*. The *things* revealed are those contained in the book which it is our aim to understand. It may be sufficient here to say, that these things relate to the Church, or the religious states of mankind, as the Lord foresaw them, and as this book reveals them. The Apocalypse presents events which were then future. The decline

of religion and the end of the Church, which rendered the Lord's Second Coming necessary, and the restoration of religion and the establishment of a new Church, which the Lord's coming was to effect, are the general subjects of the Revelation. The Revelation does not give a continuous history of the Church, from the time of the First to the time of the Second Advent. Glimpses are opened to the sight of the faithful, in some of the visions presented to the Lord's servant; to whom the revelation was first made; but the book as a whole describes the states of the Church as it would be at the close of the Dispensation, immediately before the coming of the Lord and the descent of the New Jerusalem, as the Church which was to succeed that which would pass away. The Apocalypse is said to have been given to show the things that must *shortly* come to pass. Eighteen centuries have passed since the speedy accomplishment of this prophecy was promised; and all commentators are agreed that some things at least are still unfulfilled, while none can say with convincing certainty that any part has been accomplished. The *shortly*, which is emphasized by repetition, has in fact no relation to the time at which any or all of the events would come to pass. The periods of sacred prophecy are not measures of time, but of state. Attempts have been made to estimate historical periods from some of the prophetic times of Scripture, but with little success. A seeming coincidence has been discovered in one instance, in one of the prophecies of Daniel, by making a day stand for a year; but no general application of the law has resulted in any consistent interpretation. Events occur in time, but the events themselves are the results of states, and acquire all their significance from them. Times are therefore symbolical of states, time in the natural life of man being what state is in his spiritual life. And as the history of the states of the Church is a history of the religious states of those of whom the Church consists, times are employed in Scripture prophecy to describe its states. Prophetical numbers do not express measure of time, but the character of states. When the present prophecy has the promise of early fulfilment, the promise has therefore no relation to time. Shortly means certainly. The states therein described will certainly arise, for He who is omniscient has declared their coming. When, at the beginning of the book, it is said of the things predicted that they shall shortly come to pass, and at the end, that the Lord will come quickly, the falling away of the Church from its original purity, and the coming of the Lord to establish it anew upon an immovable foundation, are declared to be both equally certain. These events are predicted in other parts of the New Testament, and, though

variously understood, are part of the common belief of Christendom. All believe in a falling away of the Church ; all believe in a Second Coming of the Lord. The only difference is the manner in which these are to be understood.

The revelation did not come from Jesus Christ to the apostle directly : *He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.* The heavenly messenger to the prophets of the Old Testament was called the angel of Jehovah ; but he who came to the prophet of the New is called the angel of Jesus. Jesus and Jehovah are the same, with this only difference, that Jesus is Jehovah in His Divine Humanity ; and the angel of Jesus and the angel of Jehovah are the same, with this difference, that the Church in heaven being, since the Incarnation, an image of the Lord's glorious Body—His Divine Humanity, is in greater power than before the Lord was manifested in the flesh : for in Christ are gathered into one all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth (Eph. i. 10). As the angel who came to John represents the Church in heaven, John here represents the Church on earth. And this, the Divine message, came from the Lord through the Church in heaven to the Church on earth. Followed from its Source, through all the degrees of its descent, the revelation came from God to Jesus, from Jesus to the angel, from the angel to John, and from John to the servants of the Lord. It came from the Lord's Divinity through His Humanity, from His Divine Love through His Divine Wisdom, and thence through Heaven and the Church ; and thus it is the infinite Wisdom of infinite Love adapted to the apprehension both of angels and men. As John represents the Church on earth, he represents, abstractly, that which constitutes the Church. There are three principles which constitute the Church—love, faith, and works. These were represented by the three disciples who were nearest to Jesus, and often accompanied Him, without the others, on important occasions, as at His transfiguration. Of these, Peter was the type of faith, James of love, and John of works—and as good works are love and faith in act, and therefore include both these graces, John represents religion as existing in its fulness and perfection in a life of love and faith. Practical religion is vital religion. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and the fulfilling of the law is love ; for all true love terminates in action, and thus becomes actual love. “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (John xiv. 21). Practical love is the last link in the chain which connects man savingly with his Maker.

2. John, to whom this revelation came, says of himself that he *bare*

record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. This may be better understood from what John has said in his Gospel. He there bears record, or witness, of the Word, which in the beginning was with God and was God, and which became manifest in the flesh. The Eternal Word, and that Word made flesh in Jesus Christ, is thus the Eternal Wisdom or Divine Truth, in its relation to Creation and Redemption. As John represented all whose inner life of love and faith is manifested in an outer life of holiness, his words are to be understood of those who bear witness to the Truth by the testimony of a holy life. These having the witness in themselves, they have set to their seal that God is true. They also have the testimony of Jesus Christ; for those who acknowledge the truth of the Lord's Word, whether it be the whole of Revelation or this particular portion of it, have the testimony of Jesus Christ, since the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy—of this as of all prophecy. This testimony, which the true Church has, consists in this, that Jesus is the one only living and true God, the one Object of faith and worship. John also bears record of all things which he saw. These were the visions presented before him, which he has recorded. It is not necessary here to inquire into the nature of these visions. They were all symbolical, and describe states of the Church and of the human mind. John *saw* them, but those whom John represents *understand* them; for to see is to understand. They were written that they might be understood. It does not indeed follow that every one, or even every age, should fully understand them. Like other prophetic signs, they could not be understood till the time of their fulfilment, till the events themselves, of which they were the symbols, should give the means of interpretation. It is only because they are now fulfilled that they can now be explained and understood. Those whom John represents see spiritually what he saw in vision, or they see inwardly in themselves what he saw outwardly in the spiritual world.

3. After speaking of himself as the recipient of the revelation, John speaks of those to whom it is addressed and for whose use it is designed. *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.* The importance of the prophecy is indicated by the greatness of the benefit which results from reading, hearing, and doing what it contains. Blessedness is spiritual and heavenly happiness, and this results from spiritual graces and a heavenly state of mind and life. Something more is needed for this than reading and hearing the contents of the book. We must read and hear spiritually. To read and hear spiritually is to receive

the truths of the book into the understanding and the will. What we read we receive through the eye, and what we hear we receive through the ear : and these two organs are symbols of the faculties to which they respectively minister. The eye ministers more directly to the understanding, the ear to the will. To read and hear is therefore to understand and to will what is heard and read. As this is to be attended with *keeping* the things written in the prophecy, the three natural acts of reading, hearing, and keeping, are expressive of the three spiritual acts of understanding, willing, and doing.

This makes the complete or perfect man, and a state which in itself is blessed or happy for ever. But where does our safety lie in reading and keeping the things written in this book, in which there is very little that men can either understand or keep ? Two important things it not only contains but plainly teaches—the doctrine of the Lord and the doctrine of Life. It teaches the sole Divinity of Jesus Christ, and the absolute necessity of a life according to His Commandments. There are many other truths contained in the book, but they can only be known by the language and imagery in which they are veiled being spiritually understood. The prophecy having been revealed from heaven, it contains heavenly doctrine, and this, like all that revelation contains, is the doctrine of Truth and Goodness—the doctrine of truth to direct the mind, and the doctrine of goodness to guide the life.

A reason is given for revealing, and for the necessity of understanding, what the prophecy contains : *for the time is at hand*. We have seen that time means state, and shortly means certainly. To the Omniscient, with whom a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as one day, the shortest and longest periods are the same. So is it, in its degree, with all that proceeds from Him, and with all that relates to Him. Heaven and the church undergo changes of state ; and when these are to be expressed by natural images, state is expressed by time, for time in the natural world is analogous to state in the spiritual. Nearness of time, in relation to the Church, means therefore imminence of state. The time being at hand does not mean that even the states of the Church, which are described in the Apocalypse, were imminent at the time the prophecy was written, but that these states were imminent at the time to which it applies. For we have seen that the prophecy is not, as many have supposed, descriptive of the successive states of the Church from its beginning, but of its simultaneous states at the time of its end. It is as if the book had been written immediately before the events : for He who is its Author

had all the future before Him ; and he who saw the vision beheld as present things which, as regards time, were yet in the distant future. In the purely spiritual sense near means interior, for what is interior is in one respect nearer to the Divine Being than what is exterior. And it is the interior states of the Church that are laid open in this prophecy. Every Church thinks itself the purest and the best. But God sees not as man sees, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. And only He who sees the interior and essential state of the Church can reveal it.

4, 5. After this exordium respecting the Authorship and object of the prophecy he was commissioned to deliver, the Seer turns to those whom he had been instructed to address. *John to the seven churches which are in Asia.* We have spoken of John as the receiver of the message, and as in that capacity representing the Church. He is now to be regarded as the deliverer of the message, and in the capacity of an ambassador he represents the Lord. John must be regarded as now employed on a most solemn and important mission. But, like each of the apostles, John had something distinctive in his representative character. As he represented the church, so does he represent the Lord. But John comes before us in this instance also as a Seer and Teacher, and as such signifies one who teaches the doctrine of truth from the principle of love, which has goodness for its end.

John's message is to *the seven churches which are in Asia.* The message can hardly be supposed to have been intended for the seven congregations in the seven churches in Asia Minor, to whom they are nominally addressed, or that their members were the only persons for whom this prophecy was intended. They may have understood something of the descriptions of their own states, of the admonitions, threatenings, and promises addressed to them. But these congregations have long ceased to exist, and it cannot be conceived that a prophecy, many parts of which they could not understand and did not see fulfilled, can have been intended exclusively or even principally for them. The seven churches of Asia, like all else in the book, are symbolical. The seven churches on earth, and the seven spirits in heaven, are the counterparts of each other, the seven churches representing the whole Church on earth, and the seven spirits around the throne representing the entire Church in heaven, as well as the Spirit of the Lord, which pervades and sustains it.

Seven is generally recognized to be a mystical and holy number. Its meaning may be learnt from the first mention of it in Scripture. God is said to have completed the work of creation in six days, and

to have rested on the seventh, which thence was sanctified (Gen. ii. 3). Hence our six days of labour and Sabbath of rest (Ex. xx. 9-11); and hence there remaineth a sabbath of rest to the people of God (Heb. iv. 9). The account of the creation in Genesis is purely allegorical, and the *six days* of toil and the *seventh* of rest, in the Jewish church, were representative. Both describe the successive *states* of spiritual labour, and the resulting *state* of spiritual rest, in the true Church. When the Christian has passed successfully through the states of re-creation, and has been formed anew in the image and likeness of God, he enters into the rest of a sanctified *state*. This, too, is the rest of the Lord—for it is He who works and overcomes in us and for us, and it is His rest in us that we enjoy as rest in Him. The number seven in Scripture involves therefore the idea of holiness and completeness. Having this meaning, it is appropriately employed in relation to the Church, of which holiness is a principal characteristic, and which, as the Lord's mystical body, is complete; as the apostle, addressing the Colossians, says to them, “And ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power” (ii. 10). The seven churches therefore include the whole body of the faithful—all who have any of the love and truth and unity which characterize the Lord's true Church.

The seven churches are placed in Asia, which is but one quarter of the globe, and which, if understood literally, would limit the application of the prophecy; for the Church has gradually, and has now almost entirely, passed from Asia to Europe, and to those parts of the globe peopled by Europeans. But Asia is introduced on the principle of symbolism. Asia is the cradle of the human race, and the soil of every church which has existed in the world: the Christian Church itself, though it has almost died out of it, had its birth there. Asia, too, is the Orient whence proceeded the light of civilization, the region whence the Western world derived the beginning at least of its science as well as its religion. It therefore spiritually signifies the light of truth from the Word. Thus understood, the seven churches in Asia are the whole Church of Christ, not as it exists in any particular place, but as characterized by a particular state. The Church is only entitled to the name of the Church in virtue of the principles which constitute religion: for only where there is religion is there a church. The Church may have an outward or seeming existence, and may even appear in great splendour and power, after true and vital religion has departed from it. But where there is no true and vital religion, there is no true and living church, however much of the form and the name may remain. Most of the seven churches are

represented as being defective and faulty ; but they are all addressed as having something of the Church in them, and capable of being restored by repentance. And such is to be understood of the Church in the last times. And how appropriately do the states of the seven churches describe the state of the Church at the time of its end, when it is widely and deeply tainted by errors of doctrine and evils of life ; for, with one exception, serious, and in some instances awful, charges are brought against them. Yet, whatever its state, the Church is the object of the Divine care and solicitude ; therefore John, as the Lord's messenger, opens his address to it in the heavenly words, *Grace be unto you, and peace.* This beautiful salutation, the combination of two which often occur in the Scriptures, expresses the Lord's love towards His Church, and His readiness to give what He desires the Church should receive, the gifts of grace and peace. These are eminently Christian blessings. For "we are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ" (Acts xv. 11), and it is He who bestows His peace upon us (John xiv. 27). Divine grace is opposed to human merit, and Divine peace to self-satisfaction.

Like all other spiritual blessings, grace and peace become ours, not simply by being dispensed to us, but by being wrought in us. The Lord is ever gracious, and He is the Prince of peace. His grace we receive in faith, His peace we receive in love. Not *for* believing and *for* loving, but *in* believing and *in* loving, do we actually receive the Divine salutation, "Grace be unto you, and peace." This salutation to the churches is *from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come ; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ.* In the literal sense it appears as if the Eternal and Jesus were two different beings, and the seven spirits different from both. This can be understood as a representative appearance only, for in the fifth chapter the Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne. These different appearances are different aspects of the same truth, as it presents itself to the Church in heaven and on earth in their different states. Yet there is this relation and correspondence between them. What in the literal sense appears as separation, is seen in the spiritual sense as distinction. The Eternal and Jesus, God and the Lamb, the Father and Son, are not separate, but they are distinct. They are two, but such a two as are the soul and body of a living man ; they are two distinct Essentials, but one Person. He who is, and was, and is to come, is the Lord's eternal Divinity, and Jesus Christ is His Divine Humanity ; the seven spirits are His Holy Spirit, represented as seven spirits, in reference to the seven churches, and to the

diversity of gifts which are of the same Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4). Yet why should the salutation of grace and peace come from the three, the Eternal, the seven spirits, and Jesus Christ? To teach us that grace and peace came from the whole nature of God—from His love, His wisdom, and His power—from His Divinity, His Humanity, and His Holy Spirit. And as they come from the Lord in His triune nature, they must be so received by the member of the Church. They must be received in his will, in his understanding, and in his life. God's love in the human will is love to God, God's wisdom in the understanding is faith in God, and God's power in the life is obedience to God.

The distinction between the Eternal and Jesus Christ being that of Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, or of the Essential Divinity and the Divine Humanity, Jesus, as the Divine Wisdom and the Divine Humanity, is called *the faithful Witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.* Jesus is the Faithful Witness, as being Wisdom or Truth itself. He is the first-begotten of the dead, as being Love or Goodness itself; and He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, as being the Author of all truth and government in the Church. These characters of the Lord have an intimate relation to each other. When the Lord had made His Humanity Divine Truth, He became the Faithful Witness, and when He made His Humanity Divine Good He became the first-begotten from the dead; and when He had thus made His Humanity Truth itself and Goodness itself, He became the Head of the Church, which He governs by the truths of His Word.

5, 6. After the salutation of peace, John offers, on behalf of the Church, an ascription of praise to Him in whose name he had saluted her. *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* It is a great and blessed truth, proclaimed throughout the Scriptures, that the Lord's love was the origin of our redemption. "God so loved the world." This is the assigned cause of the Lord's coming and redemption. So great was His love, that He laid down His life for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). "But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). And He died that He might wash us from our sins in His own blood. There is great efficacy in the blood of Jesus. We have redemption through His blood (Eph. i. 7), we are justified through His blood (Rom. v. 9), are sanctified through His blood (Heb. ix. 13), have

our conscience purged from dead works by His blood (Heb. v. 14), and have peace and reconciliation through the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20, 21). What is the meaning of this language? As the Lord said of His flesh (John vi. 63), so may we say of His blood. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the blood profiteth nothing." In its simplest acceptation, His blood means the passion of the Cross, the last of His sufferings and temptations, by which He overcame the powers of darkness and made His Humanity Divine. But in its higher sense His blood means His Divine Truth; for this was the power which overcame, and this is the power in which saving efficacy resides. And this power must operate in us, so as to remove our sin and renew us in righteousness. Sin cannot be charmed away or blotted out by an act of Divine grace, it must be washed away by the purifying power of Divine Truth. Nor can sin be removed by any but the Lord's Truth, the Truth as it is in Him in His Divine Humanity. It is by purifying us from sin and renewing us in righteousness, that the Lord makes us kings and priests unto God and His Father. There is a theory that righteousness is imputed to those who believe that Christ died for them. The imputation of righteousness is nowhere taught in Scripture; we may therefore conclude that the idea has no Divine authority. It is founded on this one great error, that the death of Christ was vicarious, that He suffered and died as the penalty or punishment of our sins, and that we are saved for what He did and suffered. It may be admitted that the Lord's death was vicarious in this sense, that if He had not died, we all must have died. Had He not effected the work of human redemption, no flesh could have been saved. But redemption did not consist in purchasing our freedom from God, but in effecting our deliverance from the powers of darkness. This was a work purely Divine, and was effected by infinite Love operating through infinite Wisdom—by the Lord's eternal Divinity acting through His assumed Humanity. We are saved *by* what He did and suffered, not *for* what He did and suffered. He suffered, not that He might save us from suffering, but that He might save us from sin. What He did and suffered He did and suffered, not as our substitute, but as our pattern and leader. As the *Captain* of our salvation He was made perfect through suffering (Heb. ii. 10). He lived a life of righteousness that we might live a righteous life, He died that we might die to sin, He rose that we might conquer death and become new creatures. While we must avoid the error that Jesus was our substitute, we must be equally careful to avoid the mistake that He was only our example. The Lord's work in the flesh lay at the very foundation of His saving work. He lived

and died, not only to show us how to live and die—how to live to righteousness and die to sin, but to supply us with the liberty and power to do so. What He effected in His own Humanity is the origin and the pattern of what He effects in us. The whole virtue of His life and death exists now as a living and life-giving power in His glorified Humanity. The Lord's glorification is both the pattern and the power of human regeneration. By glorification the Lord made His Humanity Divine Truth and Divine Goodness, and thus Himself became our King and Priest. He can now therefore make us kings and priests unto God and His Father by making us images of Himself, which He does by making us forms of truth and goodness. It may seem from the language employed that Jesus makes His people kings and priests to another than Himself—to God and His Father, or, as it might be rendered, to His God and Father. We do not here enter on the question of the Lord's Divinity. Accepting the doctrine of His eternity and infinity as beyond all reasonable doubt, what are we to understand by the form of expression first employed by the Lord Himself in the Gospel, and now repeated by John in the Revelation—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Jesus Himself was and is both God and Lord, both Father and Son. This Scripture language is expressive of the Lord's Truth and Love. The name God is expressive of the Divine Truth or Wisdom, and the name Father is expressive of the Divine Love or Goodness. When therefore John ascribes glory and dominion to Him that hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, He glorifies the Lord for having made us recipients of His Truth and Love. As the Lord's Truth and Love are two essentials of the Divine Life in Him, they become by regeneration two essentials of spiritual life in us. It is by these being received into our inner life that the Lord makes us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

The kingdom of the Lord is twofold. He has a kingdom in heaven and a kingdom on earth, or a Church in heaven and a Church on earth. His kingdom in the human mind is also twofold. He has an altar in the human heart, and a throne in the human understanding. In the heart He rules by love, in the understanding He rules by truth. This distinction exists also in heaven and in the church. Some of their members are more under the rule of love, some are more under the rule of truth. It is in reference to these two distinct kingdoms in heaven, in the church, and in the regenerate mind, that the Lord is a Priest and a King. His priesthood is the government of His love, His royalty is the government of His truth. Those

who serve Him from love belong to His priestly kingdom, and those who serve Him from faith belong to His regal kingdom. But as every one is required to govern himself, not from himself but from the Lord, therefore not only is the Lord Priest and King, but He makes us priests and kings, when He enables us to rule our hearts by His love and our understandings by His truth. As the supreme Ruler of all rulers, He is called the High Priest and the Great King—Priest of priests and King of kings. We can therefore heartily and intelligently join in the universal shouts of the faithful on earth and the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven,—*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* And in this ascription of praise to the Lord Jesus we see the duality that marks the other parts of the glorification and pervades the whole Word. For glory refers to the Lord's Wisdom and Truth, and dominion and might to His Love and Goodness. Worldly glory is the splendour that surrounds exalted stations or great deeds, and might is the power with which high dignity is invested. We have only to seek out the essence of true glory and might to arrive at the truth. No dignity or deed is truly illustrious but that which rests upon truth and justice; no dominion or might is honourable but that which is exercised for the benefit of those who are the subjects of it. The Lord can have no love of glory or dominion for His own sake. All the praise or service He desires of His people, and all the dominion He exercises over them, is for their benefit. His purpose is that we should glorify Him in our lives, and that His dominion should be exercised over us by our joyful submission to the government of His Divine Goodness; and this service and dominion should pervade all the states and stages of our life—for ever and ever. To this we may well be disposed to say “Amen.” This word, which literally means truth, is a form of asseveration and confirmation used throughout the Word, and especially by Him who was and is the Truth itself. It is the same that occurs so frequently in the Gospels as “verily;” and means truly. It is the Divine confirmation of truth by the Truth itself; and such it should be even in us.

7. After thus ascribing glory and dominion to Jesus Christ, John proceeds to say, *Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.* The prophecy properly begins here. And the one grand subject of it is here announced—THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD. Behold, He cometh! This is the burden of the Apocalypse. All other events are but its precursors and its consequences. The coming of the Lord is to be preceded

by a falling away, and to be followed by a restitution. His coming is to end the dominion of sin and establish the reign of righteousness. No prediction therefore can be so full of hope for the human race as that which gives the promise of the Second Coming of the Lord. Those whose interest is awakened to the importance of this grand subject will not be unwilling to inquire into the nature of the event, as on a right apprehension of this the use of the prophecy to them greatly if not entirely depends. The general belief is that the Lord's Second Coming, like His First, is to be a personal manifestation. He is to appear in the clouds, when every eye shall see Him, when the dead shall be raised, and all shall be gathered before Him to be judged, and after the judgment, heaven and earth shall be destroyed and a new heaven and a new earth created. This is an entirely mistaken view both of the nature and purpose of the Lord's Second Advent. Yet such a view was perhaps unavoidable. No prophecy can be clearly understood till the time of its fulfilment. And what cannot be understood is likely to be misunderstood. The Jews afford a striking example of this in regard to the Lord's First Coming. And Christians should be warned against adopting, at least against persisting in, a similar error in regard to His Second Coming. The Lord's Advent and its attendant circumstances are described in Scripture in purely symbolic language. But the church has apprehended that language literally, and has therefore taken a natural view of that which is to be spiritually understood. The spiritual sense of the Word, now made known, teaches us the true nature and purpose of the Lord's Coming. The Lord comes not in person but in spirit. His coming is not attended with the end of the world, but with the end of the church. And as we have the promise of new heavens and of a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter iii. 13), a new church is to succeed that which has waxed old and fallen into decay. Not destruction but restoration is therefore the purpose of the Lord's Coming. It is to make the church a more perfect instrument for carrying on the great work of human regeneration and salvation. These views we shall have abundant opportunities of considering in the course of our comments on this Divinely prophetic book. The consideration of the general subject will however be more proper when we come to treat of the new heaven and the new earth. In this place we shall speak of the nature and manner of the Lord's Coming.

Many reasons might be assigned for the Lord's Second Coming being an impersonal one. His First Advent was necessarily personal. By no other means than the manifestation of God in the flesh could the redemption of the world be effected. The Lord assumed

man's nature, that He might conquer where man had fallen, and become his defence against overwhelming temptation. He lived a human life and died a human death, that He might make life holy and death triumphant. Having accomplished His great work, there is no more need of His personal appearance on earth. The immediate object of His incarnation being accomplished, He is now present with us by His Spirit and in His Word. By His Spirit and in His Word He will make all further manifestation of Himself. By His Spirit and in His Word His Second Advent is effected. His Second Coming is therefore to be seen, not by eye of the body, but by the eye of the mind.

Nor is it the Lord's personal but His spiritual presence that the Church and the world require. So far as regards space and place, the Lord is as much present with all men as if they saw and heard Him with their outward senses. It is not His presence before our eyes, but His presence in our hearts and intellects, that can give us light and love, and joy and peace. This is the Lord's Coming that is predicted in the Scripture: not a coming *to* us, but a coming *into* us; a revealing of His truth to our inner sight, making Him an object of inward perception, not of outward observation. When demanded of the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God should come, Jesus answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall ye say, Lo here! or Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 20). May this not be said as truly of the King as of His kingdom? And indeed the Lord has said as much respecting Himself. Speaking of the time of the end, He says, "Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. . . . For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv. 27). Not only with the rapidity, but with the illuminating power of the lightning, does the Lord come. Consistently with this the Lord cometh with clouds, from which the lightning proceeds. The clouds with which the Lord comes are not those of the outer but of inner world. The earth to which the Lord comes is a symbol of the Church; the clouds in which He comes must symbolize something relating to the Church. As the earth is a figure of the Church, the sun, from which the earth derives its heat and light, is a figure of the Lord, as the Sun of Righteousness. What are the clouds that are drawn up by this Sun from its earth, and float in its atmosphere; that form reservoirs for the rain that descends in fruitful and refreshing showers; that treasure up the lightning and the thunder; that temper the sun's rays, that they scorch not but warm, and weaken not but invigo-

rate? What is it that comes between us and the Divine, and that carries in its bosom so many precious blessings, bestowed for our comfort, our refreshment, our growth in righteousness? It is no other than the Word of God. But the literal sense of the Word is especially meant by the cloud. For the literal or natural sense of Scripture covers its spiritual sense, shading its glory and tempering its rays, so that they may become accommodated to the capacities and states of men. It is this of which it is said, His truth, His faithfulness, reacheth to the clouds, His strength is in the clouds, He maketh the clouds His chariot; and it is from these clouds that He rains down righteousness. It was this that was shadowed by the pillar of the cloud that went before the children of Israel in all their wanderings in the desert, to guide them to the promised land. This was symbolized by the cloud in which the Lord descended on Mount Sinai, and out of which He spake to Moses; that rested on the tabernacle, and in which the Lord appeared upon the mercy-seat; and it was this of which it is recorded that, at the dedication of Solomon's temple, when the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the temple, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. This was the bright cloud that overshadowed the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, and out of which the voice came, which said, "This is My beloved Son. Hear ye Him." This is the cloud which, when the disciples beheld the Lord ascend into heaven, received Him out of their sight: and in reference to which the angels said unto them, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 9, 11). He disappeared in a cloud: He was to appear in like manner—in a cloud. On that occasion, as on all others after His resurrection, the disciples beheld Jesus, not with the eyes of their body, but with the eyes of their spirit. Indeed the whole scene was spiritual, and belonged to the spiritual rather than to the natural world. The place from which the Lord actually ascended was that part of the spiritual world which is in immediate connection with the natural world, and, like it, is in the midst between heaven and hell. It is called the World of Spirits. It is the plane on which all spiritual phenomena are exhibited. This is the place where the Lord preached to the spirits in prison after His resurrection, and which was the scene of His Divine work of redemption during the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and ascension. It was from this place that the Lord actually ascended

into heaven, and it was here that the disciples, as to their spirits, were present, and beheld Him, when the spiritual cloud that floated in its atmosphere received Him out of their sight. Into this region of the spiritual world the Lord made a personal and visible descent at the time of His Second Coming. He descended as He had ascended, in a cloud, and there every eye beheld Him, even they that pierced Him. For in the world of spirits, where space is the effect and appearance of state, all souls can see the Lord when He is pleased to manifest Himself. When the Coming of the Lord takes place, it is to perform judgment on the innumerable multitudes assembled in the middle state or world of spirits, and by means of judgment to bring the Dispensation to an end, and to establish a new one in its stead. This judgment, however, is a subject which will engage our attention when we come to the twentieth chapter. We introduce it here to explain how the Lord at His Second Coming was seen visibly and actually by every eye, and even by those also that pierced Him ; for He was there beheld alike by the righteous and the wicked.

In the natural world the Lord makes His Second Coming as truly as in the world of spirits, but here He does not come outwardly and appear visibly to the senses of men's bodies, but comes inwardly and perceptibly to the faculties of their minds. How then does He come ? He comes as He only can come, by revealing Himself in the Scriptures of truth. But it may be said, We have the Scriptures always with us. What new coming can the Lord make to us in them or by them ? True, we have the Scriptures always with us ; but the Lord is only present with us in and by the Scriptures so far as we understand them. If the Church loses the true understanding of the Scriptures, she loses the true and saving presence of the Lord. This the Jewish church had done before the coming of the Lord in the flesh, and this necessitated His coming, to bring the Jewish church to an end, and to establish the Christian Church in its place. The Christian Church has also lost the true understanding of the Word, and this has necessitated the Lord's coming in the spirit, to end the first Christian Dispensation and to establish the second, which is predicted in this book under the figure and name of the New Jerusalem. But the Lord, while in the world, not only restored the true understanding of the Scriptures, but showed them to have a deeper meaning than the Jewish church had ever known them to contain. So at His Second Coming the Lord has not only re-established the Church on its original foundation of the prophets and apostles, or on the truth as they taught it, but He has opened up and displayed hidden

glories in His Word, which in their time could neither be revealed nor understood. The foundations of the New Jerusalem are garnished with all manner of precious stones, its walls are of jasper, its gates of pearl, its streets of gold, and the Lord Himself is its temple and its light. When we come to treat of it we shall see that all this shadows forth a glorious state of the Church. We shall see further that this glory of the Church implies a new unfolding of the Scriptures ; for the Church can never transcend, nor even equal, the nature and measure of the truth as made known to her in the Word of God. The Word is the source and standard of her highest attainable perfection. The Church is capable of rising through ascending dispensations and into more exalted states, only because true theology, like true science, has no limit, for the Word of God, like His works, partakes of the infinity of its Divine Author. The greater glory which accompanies and may be said to constitute the Second Coming of the Lord, consists eminently in the spiritual sense of the Word, now disclosed for the use of the New Dispensation.

Those who pierce Jesus are those who crucify Him the second time—in more explicit terms, those who falsify His truth. In the natural sense those who pierced the Lord are included in the universal race who were to behold the Lord at His coming in the clouds. But in the spiritual sense there is a marked distinction. Every eye relates to those who see and acknowledge Him, those who pierced Him are those who see but do not acknowledge Him. It might seem inconsistent to suppose that such persons can be said in any sense to see Jesus at all intellectually. Yet it is evident that they must have been in the number of those who saw Jesus, otherwise they could not have pierced Him. Those who falsify, and even those who altogether deny the truth, must know it in a certain manner. It is remarkable how studious of the Word, and how intelligent in a certain sense respecting it, some of those have been who have striven most to undermine its authority or show it undeserving of credit, or who have so explained it as to deprive it of its true meaning and power. Paulus and Strauss have studied the Scriptures more carefully and minutely than many eminent orthodox expositors, and have brought great scholarship and intelligence to their task ; and yet their object has been to show that the Word has no claim to divinity of character or origin. These and others of such an intellectual quality see Jesus indeed, but they do not discern His true character. They deny it. They pierce Him. All their elaborate efforts are directed to the destruction of the truth, not by open denial, but by ingenious subver-

sions of its real meaning and teaching, especially respecting Jesus. These are the people who, seeing, see not, neither do they understand.

Besides these two there is another class who are affected by the Lord's Coming. *And all kindreds (or rather tribes) of the earth shall wail because of Him.* Those already spoken of are such as are more especially of an intellectual character, for they are spoken of as seeing the Lord: these, of whom we have now to speak, are such as regard Him more from the moral side of their character; who feel as well as see the events that are passing before them. All those who are included in these classes are to be understood as comprising the professed members of the Church, which is meant by the earth. The children of Israel were divided into tribes, which represented all who are in truth derived from good, or in faith from charity, and who therefore constitute the Church. But here the tribes belong to the desolated Church, and have shared in the general, and especially in the moral desolation. They therefore wail or lament because of Him. The appearing of the Son of Man gives them no comfort, but fills them with lamentation. The unfaithful and the evil are often described as being afflicted and tormented by the Lord's presence. Not that He desires to afflict or torment them, but the contrariety between Him and them does so—their opposition to His purity and love and light brings their minds into a state of agonized feeling, produced by an influence in its nature and tendency the opposite of their own will and wisdom, affections and thoughts. There is a more interior view that may be taken of this subject. Abstractly, the tribes of the earth signify the principles themselves that constitute the Church,—the principles of goodness and truth, or love and faith; and the wailing of them, like the weeping of Rachel for her children because they were not, describes the lamentation of the truth and love of the Church, that they have no longer a dwelling-place where once they had a quiet habitation. Such is the state of the Church, as Divine Truth saw it would be at the time of the end, when the coming of the Lord would take place. And as this was foreseen as an event that would surely come, the solemn conclusion is stated: *Even so, Amen.* These words express certainty. The things must surely come to pass. The Truth has declared it with the certainty of omniscience.

8. After this description of the end of the Church, or of all that truly constitutes it, there comes the announcement of a new beginning, or of Him who is Himself the Beginning as well as the Ending of all that is good and true. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come,*

the Almighty. The announcement which Jesus makes of Himself is highly deserving of our consideration for its own importance, without reference to the connection in which it stands here. It is one of the many proofs which the Word contains of the Lord's sole Divinity. It shows Him to be self-existent, infinite, and eternal; to have been before, and to be above, all other existences. He who is all this can have no equal; and can be no other than the only living and true God. While the Lord's declaration has this independent meaning, it has an important significance in connection with the immediate subject of the prophecy. The subject now treated of is the end of the Church, or of the religious Dispensation, which had its commencement at the time of the Lord's First Advent, and the Second Coming of the Lord to establish a new one. The character in which the Lord announces Himself very much resembles that in which the same John proclaimed Him in his gospel at the time of the Incarnation. The Lord is indeed, as He here declares Himself to be, the Creator and Upholder of the universe, but He is to the Church in particular all that He is to the universe in general. And when we reflect that the universe exists for the sake of the Church, or the temporal for the sake of the eternal, we can see that the Lord bears the same relation to the Church that He does to the world, but in a more eminent degree. To the Church and the spiritual states of men the Lord is the Alpha and the Omega, as being infinite and eternal Love, which enters into and governs all states of spiritual love, angelic and human, from first to last; and He is the Beginning and the Ending, as being infinite and eternal Wisdom, the origin of all finite Wisdom in angels and men. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. All human language consists of two vocal elements, because all language expresses two mental elements. There are two things that the mind desires to express in language,—affection and thought. Affection expresses itself by sound, thought expresses itself by articulations. The language of sound is universal and instinctive, therefore common to man and animals, natural affections being alike in both. But human beings have what animals have not, they have thought as well as affection, and in written language these are represented and expressed by consonants. The two letters, by the names of which the Lord calls Himself, are both vowels; they therefore represent affections, and in the Infinite they express Love, which is infinite affection. But as these two letters are the first and the last of the whole series of those which form the alphabet, the Lord is the Alpha and Omega in being the Author of all finite affection or love, from

its first activity in the inmost of the heart to its last activity in the outward life. And as the Beginning and the End, He is the first and last of all human thought. Every good affection and every true thought is from Him who is Goodness itself and Truth itself, or Love itself and Wisdom itself. There is a still further idea expressed in the Lord being the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. The Lord by things first and last, ordinates and governs all things between, or things intermediate. As the Lord is Love itself and Wisdom itself, so is He Life itself—*which is, and which was, and which is to come.* As He is Life itself, He is the Author of life, not only that which we call existence, which is common to all creatures, but that which is spiritual and eternal, which is peculiar to him who was created in the Divine image and likeness. And as the Lord is Life itself, so is He Power itself, which is not only the omnipotence by which the universe is upheld, but that by which heaven and the church are sustained ; and He is therefore the origin of all the power by which one can love or think or do anything that is good and true. Power is however especially predictable of the life, in which our affections of love and thoughts of wisdom are brought into their final results, in works and words of usefulness to our fellow creatures, and therefore of glory to God and eternal profit to ourselves. It is to be observed that all these attributes are claimed by the Lord Jesus Christ, for they belong to Him and are exercised by Him in His Humanity. It is this which constitutes the glory of the Christian religion, that it recognizes and worships God in Christ, for in the glorified Person of Jesus dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

9. Speaking in his own person the Seer now says, *I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.* John, addressing the members of the Church, calls himself their brother and companion. Religiously considered, brothers are those who are united by love, and companions are those who are connected by faith ; or, what is the same, brothers are united by good and companions by truth. But he also claims kindred with them in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. To understand the spiritual import of what John here says respecting himself, it may be necessary to advert to the historical circumstances of the case. The beloved apostle is understood to have been banished to Patmos for preaching the Word of God and bearing testimony to Jesus Christ : he could therefore feelingly address the members of the persecuted and suffering church as

their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. While thus condemned to separation from the people and inaction in the cause he so much loved, the Revelation was made to him. It may be supposed his mind was in a frame and state well fitted for receiving so solemn and important a message. His condition was also suitable for making him a type of the condition of truth and righteousness in the latter days, when faith should fail and the love of many should wax cold. While therefore in the historical sense John spoke of his own personal experience, in the prophetic sense he speaks of the experience of the people and the principle he represented, at the time of the end, not of the world, but of the Church. Prophetically he now speaks of the tribulation induced by the decline of love and faith, and the rise and active opposition of evil and error. But although in tribulation with those who are troubled, he is in the truth with those who are in the truth, for the Lord's kingdom is with those who are under the government of the Lord's truth; and he is also with those who are in the patient expectation of the Lord's Coming, as Jesus exhorted His disciples, when speaking of His Second Advent: "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke xxi. 19). Those who wait patiently for the coming of the Lord will behold Him and be comforted. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). In the patience of Jesus Christ, John was in the Isle of Patmos, for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. John had been sent, by Divine permission, to one of the isles of the Grecian Archipelago, that, in a spot near Palestine, where the Church had been, and between Asia, where the Church then was, and Europe, where the Church was about to be, a prophecy was to be revealed to him, the fulfilment of which would be the uniting into one of all the nations and families of the earth. Yet this revelation was given in a spot distinct from all these then known parts of the world, as if it were a thing that sprung not from the soil of any one preceding church, though combining the excellences of them all; a thing that, like the Holy City which symbolized it, came down from God out of heaven, already prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and that husband the Lord in His Divine Humanity. In Scripture isles signify the nations remote from the Church and its Divine worship, to which they nevertheless will come. And as Asia, as already remarked (ver. 4), signifies the origin of the light of truth, this Asiatic island indicates a state in which the mind can be spiritually enlightened. Patmos therefore symbolized both the future gentile world that was to become the subjects of the coming

Dispensation, and the enlightenment they were to enjoy. It was here therefore that John was placed, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Both are mentioned in the second verse. God means the Lord's Divinity, and Jesus Christ means His Humanity. These are distinct, comparatively as man's soul and body are distinct, but they are also one, as man's soul and body are one. In the Lord Humanity is Divine, for it is glorified and united to His Divinity, so as to form with it one Divine Person. This doctrine of the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity, and its perfect oneness with His Godhead as existing from eternity, is one of the distinguishing doctrines of the New Church, which John was employed to foretell and describe under the symbol of the new heaven and the new earth, and of the holy city New Jerusalem. Jesus Christ, as God in His Humanity, is the only Object of worship in the New Church. Its central truth is that which relates to THE LORD ; all other truths are rays of light from this central Luminary, and therefore in harmony with it. There are two points in the doctrine of the Word respecting the Lord ; one teaches that the Lord is God, and the other that His Humanity is Divine. One is meant by the word of God, the other by the testimony of Jesus. They unitedly teach the exclusive Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

10, 11. John proceeds to give the testimony of Jesus he had received in Patmos ; and we shall see how clearly and fully it confirms the doctrine of the Lord, which we have stated as that of this mysterious book, as it is of the whole Sacred Scriptures. *I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last : and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia.* The state in which John was, when he beheld the visions he has recorded, is one of great interest to us, since the knowledge of its nature gives us some insight into the nature of the visions that were presented before him. To be in the spirit is to be in such a state as enables one to see spiritual objects with spiritual eyes, or to see the objects of the spiritual world as angels and spirits see them. John and the ancient seers are supposed by some to have been ecstasies, men entranced, in which state ideas are pictured to the imagination under ideal forms, as they are in dreams. The view we have presented is much simpler and more real. To realize the true idea of a seer we have only to think of the soul seeing without the intervention of the body. We must also, it is true, think of the soul and the spiritual world as substantial and not shadowy, and as being near to each other, both which conditions are conceivable. The spiritual world should

indeed be more substantial or real than the natural. It is nearer to the Creator, who is not only the most, but the only real and perfect existence. The spiritual world should also be near to the natural, because the spiritual is in fact the soul of the natural, as God is the life of both ; and in the universe, as in man, life comes to the body through the soul. The visions seen by John were therefore real ; but, according to a law of the spiritual world, that all visible objects are outbirths and images of invisible states and ideas, the visions of the Apocalypse are the outward images of corresponding inward states, and are explicable only by the law of correspondence. “ Vision is the inmost kind of revelation, which is that of perception. This appears from the nature of visions, which take place according to the states of those to whom they are exhibited. Visions presented to those whose interiors are closed, are entirely different from such as are manifested to those whose interiors are open. Thus, for example, when the Lord appeared to the whole congregation on Mount Sinai, that appearance was a vision that appeared differently to Aaron, and differently to Aaron from what it did to Moses. So again, the visions exhibited to the prophets were different from those which were shown to Moses. There are several kinds of visions. Visions are more perfect in proportion as they are more interior.” There are indeed two opposite kinds of visions, Divine and diabolical. “ Divine visions are effected by representations in heaven, and diabolical visions are effected by magic in hell. Divine visions, which are produced by representations in heaven, are such as the prophets had, who when they were in vision were not in the body, but in the spirit. John was in vision when he saw the things which he has described in the Revelation.” The time as well as the state in which the things were seen is expressive of the sacredness of the subjects and the holiness of mind which prepared the seer to behold them. John was in the spirit on the Lord’s day. The Lord’s day was the day of His resurrection ; the day of His final triumph over death and the grave ; the day of rest after the labours of temptation and the work of redemption ; the day of sevenfold light after the night of sevenfold darkness. This sacred day, in which the Lord revealed Himself to the apocalyptic prophet in all the splendour of His resurrection glory, is at once expressive of his own holy frame and enlightened state of mind, and representative of the state which will enable the Church to understand the vision. For the Church must have inward light and perception to see spiritually what he saw in the spirit. The revelation broke upon the apostle gradually. First he heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet.

He was not at once dazzled by the sight of the Lord in His glory. Even when prepared for that great sight, he was overwhelmed by it. Unprepared, he would have been annihilated by it. This manner of manifesting Himself was not peculiar to the seer, but is common to all who behold Him with the eye of faith. It is one therefore in the nature and meaning of which we are personally interested. There are two modes by which a person makes himself known to us, by sight and hearing. By these also the Lord reveals Himself. Hearing is the sense that more directly communicates with the will and its affections, and sight is the sense which more directly communicates with the understanding and its thoughts. Both sensations are necessary to complete perception. But in the order of perceiving hearing precedes sight. Of the two senses the ear is the mind's first instructor. The infant is affected by sounds before it is awakened by sights, and learns through the ear before it acquires knowledge through the eye. So with him who is born again. His earliest religious impressions are made upon the heart; later are the perceptions that come through his intellect. The Spirit moves before it enlightens (Gen. i. 2, 3). Yet there is an identity in the cause of these different perceptions, as well as a harmony in their results. Science teaches us that the same motion that produces sound produces light: an increasing intensity of the same force comes as sound to the ear, heat to the touch, and light to the eye. The Divine Being exerts the power of the Spirit on the mental faculties as He exerts His creative energy on the bodily senses. It operates gently in the beginning, and increases in force as the mind is able to bear it. Its first impressions are on the will, and move the affections, and its second impressions are on the understanding, and enlighten the thoughts. So John first heard the Lord's voice, and then he beheld His Person. This voice, too, was at first behind him, to instruct us that the Divine influx is first into the will, which has its seat in the lesser brain, which occupies the hinder part of the head, and through the will into the understanding. This meaning of behind and before is derived from the fact that the lesser brain, which is in the hinder part of the head, is the organ of the will, the larger brain, which is in the front, being the organ of the intellect. That which John heard was a great voice, like a trumpet. Greatness is expressive of the quality of a thing as respects its goodness, and the sound of a trumpet is expressive of that which moves the affections, for wind instruments symbolize affections of good, and stringed instruments affections of truth.

11. The voice which John heard behind him said, *I am Alpha and*

Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. The first portion of this has already been considered, and the latter part will be dwelt upon when we come to treat of the Lord's messages to these seven churches. The general meaning of this address may be readily perceived. The Lord, as the Alpha and the Omega of all the states and things of heaven and the church, commands us to write in the book of the inner life all that He shall reveal to us respecting the state of the church in ourselves. For this book is a revelation to every one of what is within himself, and not merely of what relates to the world or to the Church in general.

12. Hearing it behind him, John says, *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.* John turns to see the voice which he had heard. We have seen that the Divine influx enters into the affections and then into the thoughts, or into the will and thence into the understanding. In the will the voice is heard, in the understanding it is seen. But in order to see with our eyes the voice which we have heard with our ears, we must turn ourselves—we must turn to the Lord. Yet, strictly speaking, the Lord turns us to Himself; and He so turns all who hear His voice behind,—who receive His Divine influence into the will and affections. This turning to see is necessary to the complete perception of the Lord and His love and truth. The impressions that are made on the will are general, those made upon the understanding are particular. Job expressed the sense of completed joy arising from the perception of the Divine Being when he said, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee.” When John had turned he saw seven golden candlesticks. These seven candlesticks represented the church in heaven and on earth. This church was not that which then existed on earth, but that which was to succeed it. The church as it then was and was becoming is represented by the seven churches of Asia, which are described as being, with one exception, in a state of greater or less corruption. These seven candlesticks represent the church in this sense, that the church is a recipient of light, but possesses no light of its own, or in itself. The Lord is the light of it. These candlesticks are said to be of gold, for gold is an emblem of love or goodness; and only those who are in the good of love to the Lord constitute the church, and they only can receive illumination, and become burning and shining

lights. The Church is the light of the world ; for the Church possesses the Word, and receives the light of truth immediately from the Lord, who is its source.

13. Therefore there was *in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.* The sublime description which the revelator now gives of the Lord, as the author and sustainer of heaven and the Church, is calculated to give the very highest conception of which the finite mind is capable of the transcendent greatness and glory of the Son of Man ; of Him who on earth was a man of sorrows, and had not where to lay His head ; but who now is highly exalted, and hath a name above every name, a name at which every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth. Jesus is seen in the midst of the candlesticks, as being the central luminary, from which the Church derives all its light and life and glory. He whom John saw is said to have been one like the Son of Man. Notwithstanding the glory in which He appeared, John saw in Him that same Jesus whom he had so often beheld upon earth. It was the same Lord whom he loved, clothed in humanity, but glorified above all finite glory. Still He was like the Son of Man. Jesus is the same visible and approachable Being that He was on earth ; glorified, but still human ; the Eternal God, but God-Man. But the Lord is the Son of Man in another respect, yet not another. He is the Son of Man as the Word, or Divine Truth. But in this He is the same : for as in Him the Word was made flesh, in Him also flesh was made the Word, and is now the Word in its ultimate form and manifestation. By the flesh we are to understand human nature ; and the human nature which the Lord, as the Eternal Word, assumed became Divine, and is therefore one with the Eternal Word, as the body is one with the soul. But the description of the Lord Himself as the Word, is equally applicable to the written Word. The written Word is the Eternal Word written,—the same Word expressed in human language that was manifested in human nature. The Lord when in the world fulfilled the whole Word, and by doing so became the Word in ultimates ; so that all which the Word contains the Lord is. It is necessary to see this connection, or rather identity, of the incarnate and written Word, in order to understand the appearance of the Son of Man, as He stood in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. For while it is true that the Lord Himself is the centre of life and the source of light to heaven and the Church, yet life and light come through the

revealed Word, in the inmost of which the Lord is, and by which He communicates all spiritual blessings to His people. The Church exists from the Word, and its quality is according to its understanding of the Word, including, of course, a life according to its teaching.

The Son of Man was clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. When the Lord is represented, before His incarnation and after His glorification, as being clothed, His garments must be intended to convey to our minds the idea of something Divine in relation to His Person. The garments of the saints, we are told, are their righteousness. The garments of the Son of Man are His Righteousness. Righteousness is but another name for truth brought into practice. When we live according to the laws of righteousness revealed in the Word, we are clothed in the fine linen which is the righteousness of saints. The garments of the Lord are His Righteousness. If we apply this to the written Word, which is the Lord revealed, what can the garments be, with which it is clothed, but the outward literal sense, which forms the vesture of its inward Divine truth, and which presents it in a state accommodated to angels and men? In the literal sense of the Word are especially contained the laws of righteousness and moral precepts by which the Christian life is formed. This, then, is the garment with which the Son of Man was clothed. The Word, like the Lord Himself as He appeared to John, is partly clothed and partly uncovered. The literal or natural sense of the Word consists partly of genuine, partly of apparent truths. Its genuine truths, which describe God as He is, are as the face and hands and feet that are uncovered; and its apparent truths, which describe God as our feeble thoughts have clothed Him, are the garment that invests the Son of Man down to the foot. The Lord, the Divine Man, as He appears to the Grand Man, which is the Lord's mystical body, is seen in this double aspect; for in all the three heavens He, as to His truth, is seen partly clothed and partly unclothed,—in the celestial heaven as to face and head, in the spiritual heaven as to the body and hands, in the spiritual and celestial-natural heaven as to the legs and feet.

While clothed with a garment, the Son of Man was girt about the paps with a golden girdle. The girdle was used in old times for confining the loose garment that was worn as a common covering over the "vesture" or inner garment: and as the Son of Man was clothed with this "garment," He wore also the girdle that belonged to it. Regarding the Lord as the Word, the girdle is that which forms the bond of connection between, or which binds in one, the natural and

spiritual truths of the Word. And whether we view this subject in relation to the Word itself or to the Church as the recipients of its truths, there is an instructive lesson in the girdle being a golden girdle, and in the Lord being girt with it about the paps. Gold is an emblem of love and goodness. In respect to the Lord, His garment is the proceeding sphere of His truth, and the golden girdle is the proceeding sphere of His love. The operation of these spheres is different and yet concordant. Truth distinguishes, love unites. Distinction is for the sake of union. Truth enables us to discriminate, not only between opposites, but between relatives,—to see the distinction and relation of concordant things; and love serves as a uniting medium between them. All the truths of the Word are distinct and yet concordant. The more clearly we see the distinction between one truth and another, the clearer and more intelligent is our faith; and the more they are united by love, the more perfect is our state. Truths without love not only do not harmonize and unite, but conflict and separate. This is exemplified in the different religious sects. Truths distinguish them, for each has some distinguishing doctrine. If all were influenced by love, that love, as a golden girdle, would unite them into one glorious church, the Lord's mystical body, the image of His own glorious Body. But when they are not influenced by love, but rather regard each other as alien and even hostile to the truth,—that is, to their own particular truth, which they regard as *the* truth, then truth, or what they regard as truth, separates them; and instead of forming one united church, they exist as so many separate sects. And thus we see “instead of a girdle a rent.” The same law holds in respect to the individual members of the Church. Truths distinguish them and love unites them. And in each mind truths are harmonized and united by love. Love gives them one life and one end, without which they have neither unity nor power. The paps, about which the Lord was girt with the golden girdle, have a signification nearly allied to that of the girdle itself. The breast is symbolical of love, specifically of that which is received by the members of the Church as charity, or love to the neighbour. But the paps are no doubt mentioned for a particular purpose; and when we compare this imagery with that employed by Isaiah, where (lx. 16) he gives the Church the promise that she shall suck the breasts or paps of kings, we can be at no loss to understand that reference is here made to the Lord's love as the fountain of the Church's nourishment. Under different aspects the Lord's love is the golden girdle by which He binds His Church to Himself, and the paps from which He supplies her with the food of spiritual life.

14, 15. In his description of the Son of Man, John proceeds to say, *His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters.* The magnificent appearances under which the Lord presented Himself to His servant are all correspondences, each therefore having a distinct meaning, and all having reference to Him as the Word, in His relation to heaven and the Church. The head is the highest or inmost, the feet are the lowest or outermost, principles of goodness and truth in the Word. The Lord's head is His Divine Love and Wisdom in first principles, and His hair is His Divine Love and Wisdom in ultimates. His eyes are His Divine Wisdom in its circumspection and providence. His feet are the Divine Love and Wisdom in that degree which may be called natural. His head is His Divine celestial principle, His eyes His Divine spiritual, and His feet His Divine natural. Regarding the Lord as the Word, His Divine Truth, as accommodated to the angels of the three heavens, is described by the Lord's appearance: His head, as it appears in the inmost or celestial heaven, His eyes, as it appears in the middle or spiritual heaven, and His feet, as it appears in the lowest or ultimate heaven. Under this is the Church on earth; for the earth is His footstool, as heaven is His throne. Whether we regard this representative description of the Son of Man as applicable to the Lord Himself, to His Word, or to His kingdom, it is equally instructive, and shows the harmony of the whole. The Lord produces the Word, and the Word produces heaven, and heaven produces the Church. Strictly speaking, the Lord produces the Word, through the Word heaven, and through heaven the Church. There are therefore a harmony and correspondence between them, so that that which describes one in its measure describes all. But the description of the Son of Man is given with particulars which we have yet to notice. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. The head and hair are both mentioned as being white. Whiteness is emblematical of purity. And as the head and the hair are expressive of the Word in first principles and ultimates, in its spiritual and literal sense, their whiteness indicates that the Word in both is pure truth—truth without error, truth without evil. This is still more clearly taught by the hair being white like wool and snow. The Word in its literal sense contains lessons of love and lessons of wisdom, of goodness and of truth, and therefore leads the mind both to charity and faith. The first of these are meant by the wool, the

second by the snow, and their purity by their whiteness. In the literal sense of the Word there are things that seem incapable of being regarded as perfectly pure—parts which moralists object to as contaminating to the mind of the reader. Yet the things to which they object are not impure in themselves, but only produce a sense of impurity in us because of our impurity. There is nothing in itself impure in nakedness. In perfect innocence it would produce no sense of shame. Sin has made it shameful. So there is nothing in the Divine Word that is in itself impure, or that tends to produce impurity. We should remember that the Word in its literal form is expressed, and speaks of things, according to the state of the age in which it was written; but if we look at the substance and purpose of revelation, it will be found to be morally white like wool, and intellectually as white as snow. The eyes of the Son of Man were as a flame of fire. In this figure we may recognise this Divine lesson, that Divine Wisdom is full of Divine Love, and consequently that Providence, while conducted by unerring wisdom, is inspired by unwearied love. Divine Wisdom, as the wisdom of love, is expressed by His eyes being as a flame of fire. The feet of the Son of Man are said to have been like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. The Divine natural principle of the Lord's Humanity, and of the Word, is compared to brass, because brass is an emblem of natural goodness, which does not mean goodness derived from nature, but Divine goodness, made human to the lowest degree of humanity and human life. That to which the Lord's feet are said to be like is not only brass, but fine brass; and as this implies refined brass, reference is made in this to the refining and glorifying process which the Lord's Humanity underwent in His passing through the furnace of affliction and temptation. But what is the fire that purifies? It is neither the fire of Divine wrath nor yet the fire of hell. Temptation separates and carries away the dross; but the Divine Love, which is above all temptation, permitting and overruling it, is that which is the origin of all the good which is effected, and the rewarder of success. It is the fire of Divine Love that gives the good of life all its brightness as well as purity. This is the fire in which the fine brass burned. The voice of the Son of Man was as the sound of many waters. Water is emblematical of truth, and many waters of abundance of truth. The Lord's voice is said to be like the sound of many waters, because Divine revelation, which is eminently the voice of God, is as the rushing of many waters; for it ever flows in living streams for the refreshment and purifying of the mem-

bers of His Church, and of all who will receive it. Strictly, the figure is no doubt limited to the sound of the water, and not to the water itself; but as all similitudes in the Word are correspondences, the similarity between the sounds arises from correspondence between the things; and the Lord, we know, spoke of the operation of His spirit as the flowing of water, when He said, "He that believeth in Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters."

16. The description of John discloses still more of the majesty and glory of the Son of Man. *And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength.* Seven candlesticks, seven spirits, seven stars. All these are afterwards explained, or rather applied; for all explanations in the Word being portions of the letter of Scripture, contain a spiritual sense equally with the parts explained. The seven candlesticks are the seven churches, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven spirits are the seven eyes of the Lamb. These will be considered under the respective heads. At present it is sufficient to say that stars signify Divine Truths, as they proceed from the Lord to the Church. The seven stars are all the holy truths which are revealed in the Word for the instruction and direction of the Church. They are said to be in the right hand of the Son of Man; for Divine Truth is that by which the Divine Power is operative in the Church. The truth which is meant by stars is that which comes to the Church as knowledge; and the highest of all knowledge is that which relates to the Lord Himself in His Humanity. This knowledge is power; for the knowledge of Jesus as the Saviour of the world, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. Saving faith has, however, its origin in love, as saving truth has its origin in goodness,—the stars were in the right hand of the Son of Man. In the Word sun, moon, and stars are often mentioned together. Their creation at the beginning of the world, and their extinction at the end of the world are distinctly stated. But as the Word treats of the beginning and end of the Church under the figure of the creation and destruction of the world, the luminaries of heaven have a corresponding difference of meaning. The sun, moon, and stars are the emblems of love, faith, and knowledge. These are the luminaries of the Church, the delegated sources of its life and light. While these hold on to burn, the Church continues to know her signs and seasons, her days and years; and her seed-time and harvest, and summer and winter, and day and night, fail not to return with

beneficial regularity. When they fail, when the sun is darkened, and the moon withdraws her light, and the stars fall from heaven, then come the sum and the end. It is not, however, this consummation that is treated of in the present case, but the power which the truth has when it is seen and acknowledged in its connection with the Lord of life and light. Another emblem of His power is presented in the going out of His mouth of a sharp two-edged sword. This is analogous to His voice being as the sound of many waters. The sword, like the waters, is an emblem of truth. Paul speaks of the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit (Eph. vi. 17); and the author of the Hebrews says, the Word is sharper than any two-edged sword (iv. 12). Truth is presented under several different emblems, for it has several different functions. It illuminates like light, it purifies like water, it cuts like a sword. A sword is a sign of war; but the Lord's warfare is not carnal but spiritual; it is not against persons but principles. The sword of the Lord's truth is two-edged, because it wars against error and evil; and it is sharp, because it is piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and body, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. iv. 12). While the Lord's truth is powerful, both in refuting His enemies and convincing His people, that truth ever proceeds from and is therefore full of love; for while out of His mouth went a two-edged sword, His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. The sun, as we have seen, is an emblem of Divine love; and, indeed, of love and wisdom united; for its heat is love and its light is wisdom. The intensity of the Lord's love is indescribable, for it is infinite, and can only be compared to the sun shining in its strength.

In reading John's account of the appearance of the Son of Man, one cannot fail to be struck with the resemblance it bears to the appearance of Jehovah, as described by several of the sacred writers. Moses and seventy of the elders saw the God of Israel; "and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness" (Ex. xxiv. 10). Still more minute is the description of the appearance granted to Ezekiel. Above the firmament was the likeness of a throne; and upon the throne the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. "And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the

voice of one that spake" (i. 26). The appearance recorded in Daniel of the Ancient of days, presents one feature having a closer resemblance to the present than any of the others. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire" (vii. 9). It must strike every one that the similarity of the appearance implies the identity of Jehovah and Jesus, who are thus placed on an equality of transcendent glory.

17, 18. It is not therefore to be wondered at that, as Ezekiel fell on his face when he beheld the vision of Jehovah, John should fall prostrate and powerless before the vision of Jesus. *And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead.* The only difference is, that the humiliation of the Christian prophet was still more profound than that of the Jewish, indicating the more completely overwhelming glory of the Object he was privileged to behold. A glimpse of this glory he had beheld on the mount of transfiguration; but the glory which was then transient had now become permanent, for the glorification of the Son of Man was now for ever perfected. Compared with the humility of the Son of Man in which John had so long seen Him upon earth, the present glory was indeed transcendent. And no one who reads the account of it with any feeling of reverence can fail to recognise in Jesus the Infinite and Eternal. But viewing this sacred relation apart from doctrinal considerations, John's falling down as dead at the feet of the Son of Man teaches us a great truth. The near presence of Him who is Life itself produces in the beholder a sense of the deprivation of life. Our life, it is true, is from God, and His presence is constantly with us. But this life passes from the Infinite to the finite through tempering mediums, as the sun's heat and light pass through tempering atmospheres, ethereal and aerial. And as the sun's untempered rays would consume what they now nourish and adorn, so would the untempered rays of the Sun of Righteousness consume any one brought into immediate contact with Him whose countenance is as the sun shineth in his strength; for the Lord is indeed the Sun of the spiritual world. But the Lord is the origin of life as consisting of goodness and truth; and these also in men are accommodated to their feeble faculties by numerous mediums. Between the highest heaven and the Lord, who is far above all heavens, there are created spheres, through which the Divine influx passes before it can be consciously received by the highest angels there; and without these mediums the ardency of the Divine influence would

consume them. Besides passing through these super-celestial spheres in coming to the angelic heavens, the Divine influx passes through all these heavens in coming to men on earth. When, therefore, any man, however exalted his state, is permitted to enter into a nearer presence of the Lord than is consonant with his real state and ordinary condition, he is more or less overwhelmed by the Divine glory, according as he is more or less raised above his true level. What is our life compared with that of Him who is Life itself? and what are our goodness and truth compared with those of Him who is Goodness itself and Truth itself? They are as nothing. Raised for a moment above our sphere, we must, like John, fall down at the feet of the Son of Man as dead.

But while an extraordinary and sudden elevation produces a sense of the deprivation of life, there is an ordinary and gradual elevation, which causes self-annihilation of another kind. The life of every one is his love; and as every one naturally loves himself and the world, the life of every one by nature is opposed to the Divine Life, which is Love in its purity, the essential nature of which is to love others, and to desire conjunction with them, that they may be happy for ever. When, in the progress of the regenerate life, the soul is elevated so far as to see and be sensible of the purity of the Divine Love, and the impurity of the natural human love, the result is, a profound sense of humiliation; which, though it may not be attended with the absolute death of the corrupt selfhood, gives at least a deep consciousness of the absolute deadness of all that is one's own, as compared with the Lord's, either in Himself or in His creatures. This state is well described by Daniel when he saw the vision of the man, whose "body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass. And there remained," says Daniel, "no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption" (x. 6, 8). This is a state into which the Lord desires that every one should come, and into which every one whom John represents does come; for love to God can only be perfected by the annihilation of the love of self. Only those who thus die can be made alive. Only on those who thus fall down as dead at the feet of the Son of Man can He lay *His right hand*; and say to them, *Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.* The right hand of the Lord is His power, and His power is the omnipotence of Love and Wisdom, which is Life. The laying on of the hand is symbolical of the communication of power,

or of what the power has to communicate. And as the Lord imparts of His life, which is Love, to those who lay down their own life, which is hatred, as all self-love is, this is expressed by the Lord's laying His right hand upon the prostrate apostle. This laying on of the Divine hand is accompanied with the comforting exhortation, "Fear not." The revealings of the Divine perfection to beings in their sinful state can but inspire the mind with fear. Several instances occur in the Word of fear being the first impression produced by the presence of superior beings, and of the exhortation, "Fear not," being addressed by them to the alarmed beholders. When Daniel trembled before the vision of the Holy One, he heard a voice saying unto him, "Fear not." When Zacharias was troubled at the appearance of the angel, who had been sent to announce the birth of John, the angel said unto him, "Fear not." When the angel of the Lord came upon the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, to announce to them the birth of the Saviour, and they were sore afraid, the angel said to them, "Fear not." When Peter, on seeing the miraculous draught of fishes, exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Jesus said unto him, "Fear not." When, at the transfiguration, the three disciples were sore afraid, Jesus touched them, and said unto them, "Fear not." The same assuring words were addressed by the angel to the women at the sepulchre, and by the Lord Himself, when He met them as they fled from the sepulchre with fear and great joy. Holy fear is the prelude of holy joy. It is not the slavish fear of dread at the presence of One who is All-powerful, but the deep reverential fear of love for One who is transcendently good and perfect. This is the fear which can be soothed by the voice of love, and can become receptive of new life. For the voice comes from Him who is the Life. This was the ground of assurance given to John: "I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth." Not only is Jesus the First and the Last, as the Being who alone is from eternity to eternity, but He is the Saviour, who is the Beginning and the End of the work of regeneration—the Author and Finisher of our faith. And He is so, because He it is who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore. It is a great truth that Jesus is the Author of Salvation, because He was crucified and rose again. He thereby accomplished the subjugation of hell and glorified His humanity, and thus became our Redeemer and Saviour. But it is also true that the Lord has been crucified a second time, and has become dead to the Church. His death is effected by His denial. Not that Jesus has ever been actually denied in name as the Lord and Saviour of the world;

but He has been virtually denied, both by denying the Divinity of His Humanity and the true Divinity of His work. He is acknowledged to be a Divine person, but not to be the only Divinity; and He is acknowledged to be God and Man, but not to be God-Man. He is acknowledged to have redeemed the human race, but to have done so by reconciling God to man, as well as reconciling man to God.

But as the Lord has been crucified afresh, He has also risen afresh; and, behold, He is alive for evermore. He has made His Second Advent; and the Church of His Second Advent will acknowledge Him in His true character, as Jehovah in His glorified Humanity.

In the individual application, this teaches us that in every one who undergoes regeneration, the Lord is dead before He is alive. In every natural man the truth is without life. When he is converted and becomes spiritual, the truth is made alive; and if he continues faithful, the truth in him is alive for evermore. And thus Jesus is to him Yea and Amen. Confirmed in love and life, he is a son and heir. And when his state is fixed, he is not only saved from condemnation, but he is preserved from temptation; for Jesus has the keys of hell and of death. By the great work of human redemption, the Lord acquired power over hell and spiritual death; but this power is only effective for salvation in those who accept the Lord as their Saviour. And the Saviour not only has the power of shutting the hell that is without us, but that also which is within us. For the natural mind of every unconverted and unregenerate man is a little hell, an image of the great. And unless the Lord receives power over the lesser, His power over the greater can do us no eternal benefit. Dead and in hell as every unconverted sinner is, he has this ground of possibility, and, if he desires it, of hope, that Jesus has the keys of hell and of death. No man can deliver himself from his naturally dead and infernal condition. It was because no man had the power of self-deliverance that the Lord came into the world to take that power unto Himself, a power which He has as Man, and therefore by virtue of His Incarnation. He can open, and no man shut; and shut, and no man open. He can unlock the doors of the mind which sin has closed, and allow the imprisoned desires and hopes of the penitent to come forth; and He can shut the doors, that they fall not back again unto death and perdition. The condition of every unregenerate soul is this: In every mind there are remains of goodness and truth, which have been insinuated in early life. In the unconverted these are covered over and concealed, and thus imprisoned by the evils of self-love and the love of the world; and when one turns to the Lord in

faith and repentance, He opens the gates, and brings out into light and liberty the good affections and pure thoughts hitherto oppressed as bondmen and slaves.

19. When John had beheld the sublime vision of the Son of Man and the objects around Him, he received the command, *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* The command to write is simple enough in its natural sense. But it has a deeper meaning. Another book and another writing besides this revelation are preserved for futurity. Man's mind is a book, and his life is a scribe; and in that book are written in indelible characters the principles of good and truth, or evil and falsity, which the understanding has acknowledged, and the states which are and shall be formed from them hereafter, even to eternity. And now follows a general exposition of two of the things which John had seen. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches. The angels are understood to mean the ministers of the churches. Thus understood, the ministers of these and all other churches, that have any just claim to the name, are like stars in the hand of the Son of Man: they derive their light and power from Him, they communicate to the Church the knowledge of the truth which they derive from the Word, and so far as they teach the truth from love, their word is with power. The Church, like the candlesticks, has no light of its own, but is merely a recipient of light from Him who stands in the midst. In a higher sense the stars are the Church in heaven, and the candlesticks are the Church on earth. The seven stars are then expressive of the whole angelic heaven; and the angels of heaven are the angels of the churches; for the Church in heaven is in connection and communion with the Church on earth, and the angels are all ministering spirits. And while the Church in heaven gives its light and ministry to the Church on earth, as the stars in the firmament give light and direction to the inhabitants of the earth, the Church on earth gives light and direction to the world around; for by its direct power and its indirect influence the light of revelation is diffused among all nations. There is still an individual application. The stars in the right hand of the Son of Man are the knowledges, and also the principles, of goodness and truth in the spiritual mind; and the candle-

sticks are the knowledges and the principles of goodness and truth in the natural mind. The regenerate Christian is a heaven and an earth, or a church in heaven and a church on earth, in their least form. The truths he receives from the Lord into his inner man are stars in the firmament; and the truths he manifests in his life are the candles in the candlestick, which give light to all that are in the house, or enlighten all the thoughts of the mind, and enable him to let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father who is in heaven.

CHAPTER II.

IN this and the following chapter the seven churches of Asia are individually addressed. Their state is described by Him who knows the heart and tries the reins. Their faults are exposed, their virtues are recognised. They are reproved and commended, warned and encouraged. Continuance in sin is threatened with punishment, turning to righteousness has the promise of reward. Through them the Lord speaks to us. The seven churches represent all classes of professing Christians who have any remnant of holy thought and feeling, to which the Holy Word can appeal, and of which the Holy Spirit can take hold, so as to bring them to repentance and make them true and living members of his New Church; each church represents one particular class. Whoever, therefore, can interpret the sacred language in which the states of these several churches are described, will find in some one of them his own character portrayed by infallible wisdom. For these inspired descriptions include all spiritual states of mind and life, from the least to the most receptive of the light and love of God, as brought near to men by the Second Coming of the Lord in power and glory.

1. *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.* The church of Ephesus describes that class of persons who are more eager in the pursuit of knowledge than in the acquisition of goodness. The character of those represented by the Ephesian church, as of all the others, is discoverable from the terms in which they are addressed, and especially from the character in which the Lord announces Himself to them. To the church of Ephesus Jesus describes Himself as He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. This is part of the appearance in which the Lord

presented Himself to John, as related in the previous chapter. The stars, we have seen, are employed in Scripture as the symbols of Divine and heavenly knowledge. The golden candlesticks have a similar meaning; but there is this distinction between them. The seven stars are the knowledge of Divine and heavenly things in the inner man, and the seven candlesticks are the knowledge of these in the outer man. To those whose distinguishing characteristic is an affection for spiritual knowledge, the Lord announces Himself as the sole Author of all that knowledge. He holds the stars in His right hand. The knowledge of goodness and truth, in the heaven of the inner man and in heaven itself, proceeds from Him; and all who possess and use it aright are upheld by His Almighty power. He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. All the light of truth, in the outer man and in the church, has Him alone as its source. He is the centre of every doctrine and every law of life—for to walk is to live. Unless supported and maintained by Him, the stars fall from heaven, the lights are extinguished.

2, 3. The next two verses enumerate various particulars relative to the practice of those represented by the church of Ephesus, which are mentioned in a manner that implies approbation. *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.* The first thing adverted to is a momentous one: “I know thy works.” This is repeated, under the same circumstance of precedence, to every one of the churches. All the other particulars which the Lord alone knows of them differ. This is alike in all. This searching and solemn warning, carried to its final end in the often repeated declaration that every man shall be judged according to his works, whether they be good or evil, speaks in thunder-tones, deeper if not louder than those of Sinai, of the all-important place which good works hold in the doctrine and economy of the Gospel. Paul, indeed, affirms that man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. But that to which the faith of the Gospel is opposed is not the law of the decalogue, but the law of ordinances. This Jesus abolished, nailing it to His cross. The law of the ten commandments He came not to destroy but to fulfil. Nor did He come only to fulfil it Himself, but to teach and enable men to fulfil it also. “Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and

teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 19, 20). Such being the Divine authority of the law and the eternal obligation of fulfilling it, it is not surprising that it should be applied by the Saviour Himself to test the spiritual state of every candidate for the kingdom.

Before considering those parts of the address that are peculiar to the Ephesians, we may inquire why their church is the first of the seven to which this Divine admonition is addressed. This church represents the first state of all who enter on the Christian life. The love for acquiring knowledge respecting the truth is an intermediate link between attachments that belong wholly to the natural mind and those that belong to the spiritual ; and unless that love were awakened it would be impossible to pass from a natural to a spiritual state. The season of youth is the natural period for the development of this love ; and a most hopeful sign it is when early manhood culls the flowers of science, and prefers as the fairest that knowledge which teaches the true import of the Holy Word, and the genuine doctrines of the Church. Nothing is said to discourage such pursuits ; on the contrary, the Lord sanctions them with His Divine approbation, by manifesting Himself as their Author and Upholder : for He holdeth the stars, He walketh in the midst of the candlesticks. In the enumeration of the works of those who are in this state there is nothing He condemns. His language is that of commendation. And though He points out something as still wanting, the reward He promises as consequent on the Ephesians' supplying this deficiency is peculiarly adapted to encourage those whose ruling affection is the love of knowledge ; for He assures them that they shall eat of the tree of life,—that they shall add to their knowledge wisdom. But between the first and this last state, when the promised blessing is realized, there are intermediate duties and virtues which require to be considered.

The Ephesians are commended for their labour and patience, and their aversion for them that are evil. There are two kinds of labour, intellectual and moral. The first is that which distinguishes those who are represented by this church. Intellectual labour and patient investigation are the first activities of the mind in its religious advancement. Even the inability to bear them which are evil has, in this stage of the spiritual life, more of an intellectual than of a moral character. Readiness to discover and censure blemishes in others does not always indicate an equal readiness to see and condemn evil in our-

selves. In the inner sense this has a less personal meaning. Them which are evil are, abstractly considered, evils themselves. The knowledge of truth which the mind possesses at this period enables it to know and condemn evil; but the aversion to it is as yet more in doctrine than in life. It cannot bear evil to be called good, nor good to be called evil, and is full of zeal against all doctrines that teach or sanction such a perversion. We have a counterpart to this feature in the character of the Ephesians. They have tried them which say they are apostles, and have found them liars. This, we need hardly say, is not intended to be understood in its literal sense. All the apostles, except John himself, had entered into their rest long before this address went forth to the churches. When the true had passed away no counterfeit could follow. We have only to elevate our minds from the teachers to the things they taught, to see that the apostles represented the truths themselves which they were commissioned to teach. When, therefore, the Ephesians are said to try them who say they are apostles and are not, the meaning is, that those who take particular delight in acquiring and spreading the knowledge of the truth, exercise a rigid scrutiny on doctrines that put forth a claim to Divine or apostolic authority. And when it is added that they find them liars, the meaning is, that they detect the error or falsehood of doctrinal pretenders to the true faith. But they not only detect error; they also resist it, and vindicate and teach the truth. They have borne and have patience. For to bear has not here a passive but an active signification; and patience means, not meek submission merely, but constancy and perseverance. Resistance to error and maintenance of the truth are virtues which those who are in the love of knowledge delight to exercise. But they advance to other and higher excellencies. For the Lord's name's sake they labour and faint not. They had previously been commended for their labour. Their labour has now acquired a new character. Formerly they acted more from themselves and for their own sake; now they act more from the Lord and for His sake. We should say, for the sake of His name. Divine language is exact and full of meaning. This phrase, which occurs in other parts of the New Testament, does not mean on account of the Lord or for the honour of His name. The Lord's name means His nature, His attributes. His injunction to His disciples, to ask the Father in His name, has no such meaning as that which has come to be so commonly attached to it, of praying God to be merciful to sinners for the sake of His Son. To pray in the name of Jesus is to pray in the spirit of Jesus; for true prayer is the spirit of Jesus

speaking in our hearts, inspiring us with the true end and objects of prayer. When the Ephesians are said to labour for the sake of the Lord's name, we are instructed that those who are in the love of truth will labour in the spirit as well as in the cause of Jesus. They will indeed be strenuous in advocating the cause of their Saviour, in setting forth His attributes and character, and vindicating them from the degrading misconceptions of a degenerate age; but they will, as they advance, learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart, and teach the truth in charity.

4, 5. Thus far the church of Ephesus has been addressed in the language of commendation. She is now to hear words of reproof and warning. *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* The church has left her first love, that ardent and disinterested charity by which the early Christians were so eminently distinguished, that even the surrounding heathen were constrained to admire those whom they pitied and despised. As, however, these words are addressed to persons entering the New Church, who cannot previously have been in a higher state, the expressions must have a more interior meaning. The term "first" always means what is first in rank or importance. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you," means to seek these as the first and the highest of all good gifts, knowing that all lesser gifts will follow in their train. The first love is the love that occupies the first rank among Christian graces. The love of God and the love of the neighbour are the highest of the religious affections. The love of knowledge is the highest affection of those who are represented by the Ephesian church. They have not yet attained this first love. How then can they have left it? They have left it, not absolutely but relatively; not out of sight, for they have acknowledged and even maintained that love and charity are before faith and knowledge, but they have left it practically, for they have left it unattained. Love has been first in theory, not in practice. The love of knowledge has been their primary love, the love of goodness their secondary love. This is the charge that is brought against them. This is the fault they are required to correct, the defect they are called upon to supply. How beautifully does the apostle describe this state where he declares the supremacy of charity, and the nothingness of all other gifts without it! (1 Cor. xiii.) Knowledge and all lower gifts necessarily precede charity; for they are only means of which charity is the end. Knowledge itself tells us this. And yet while in our Ephesian state we are liable practically to forget it, till

the voice of truth calls within us, *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works.* Spiritual remembrance is not an act of the memory but of the heart. This is the reason that in Scripture the memory is said to have its seat in the heart. In judgment God remembers mercy. Under the admonition of Divine Truth man remembers from whence he is fallen. He remembers when he feels his state as a fallen being. He is humbled by a sense of his unworthiness. He sees, not the vanity only, but the criminality of knowledge that leaves the heart unpurified and the life unholy. He sees and feels that knowledge puffeth up. He sees that knowledge, so far as it does not raise, degrades ; so far as it does not justify, condemns. Yes. He who does not morally advance with knowledge, goes back, he who does rise with it, falls. But here, too, is the use and the blessing of knowledge : it reveals all this to the mind ; it condemns its own exaltation, and shows us a better way than its own. It is thus the means, though not the cause, of the remembrance from whence we have fallen. That from whence we have fallen is our first love. To remember the first love is to have the love of God and of the neighbour awakened in our hearts. This is vital remembrance. It is the recalling and raising into new and higher life of all the best and purest affections of childhood and youth, and the best moments of our subsequent experience. This leads to practical repentance ; for it leads to the doing of the first works. The first works, like the first love, are those which are first in excellence. Works done from the love of God are the first works. They are before all others in disinterestedness, judgment, and usefulness. Last in the order of time, they are first in the order of merit—not of meritoriousness. Works of love are those things of which it is said, *The last shall be first ;* as knowledges are of those of which it is said, *The first shall be last.*

This, then, is the state to which all who have attained a knowledge of Divine things are imperatively called, or rather most tenderly invited to advance. And they are called, not only because their attainments will then be full and complete, but also because otherwise they will be deprived of what they have already attained. For the terrible denunciation follows : *Or else I will come to thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* How appropriate is the image employed in this summary threat ! Those who are addressed are they who have been zealous in the pursuit of knowledge, but have not been equally ardent in the cultivation of goodness. Unlike the woman in the parable, they have not lighted their candle in order to sweep the house, and seek diligently

for that which they have lost till they find it. They have used it too much to gratify their own love of knowledge, or to shine in conversation, prelection, or debate; not to discover and remove the evils of their own hearts. The consequence of such a neglect of the essential use of truth is that which is here announced. Unapplied knowledge is taken away. It is not the Lord who deprives the mind of its unimproved truth. This is an appearance. The fact is, that the evil which truth should have removed in this life will remove the truth in the life to come. This is inevitable. Its certainty is declared in the language in which the Lord's coming to the unprofitable servant is announced. Quickly means certainly. The Lord comes by death and by judgment. Both of them are certain; and as certain is the removal of the candlestick out of his place, when that place has been the natural mind, where natural things reside.

6. But the Ephesian church represents those who, though they require, do not neglect, the Divine exhortation to repent. Although they are not sufficiently alive to the importance of searching out the evil that lurks in their hearts, and of resisting and removing it by self-denial, they are not in the love of evil. On the contrary, they hate it; especially do they hate and oppose any doctrine that sanctions or encourages evil. *This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.* Little is known of these heretics. If such a sect actually existed, the present reference to it shows that the practice of the Nicolaitanes was opposed to the principles of the Gospel. The Nicolaitanes, as understood in the spiritual sense, are those who separate goodness from truth, or charity from faith, in the business of salvation. Esteeming faith as the only grace that saves, they regard the law as the rule, not of spiritual, but of moral life. When the Divine law is thus regarded, it is deprived of its spirituality. It is no longer a law of conscience, but of action. And when the Divine commandments cease to be the conditions of a covenant between God and man, and are only the rules of conduct between man and man, they exercise but little control beyond what self-love or self-interest demands. Those who have the true knowledge of religion, however little they may have advanced in the religious life, must, if they are sincere, be averse from even the good deeds of the Nicolaitanes, much more from their evil deeds. This aversion comes from the Lord. His truth condemns such deeds, His love revolts against them; and those who have received any measure of His love and truth regard such works with holy hatred.

7. The evils and dangers which stand in the way of the Ephesian

church she is now exhorted to overcome, and so obtain the reward of conquest. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.* The call to him that hath ears to hear is addressed to all the seven churches, and is one, therefore, to which all are alike required to give heed. It is an appeal to all who have the faculty of understanding the Divine truths which the Lord utters, and a demand that they obey them. It is therefore addressed to all; for all have that faculty, unless they have destroyed it in themselves by the wilful confirmation of evil and error. It is a solemn assurance that the knowledge of even Divine truth is of no avail, unless a willing obedience be rendered to its requirements. This is what the Spirit saith to every church, and speaks in every conscience not seared by sin or perverted by error. The Spirit speaks to all in the language of encouragement, to give them the promise of a blessing in the recompense of reward. And here again, while the reward is different to each, the condition on which it is promised is the same to all. The reward is promised to him that overcomes. The Christian life is a warfare; and the promised blessing is the reward of victory. Accordingly, none are addressed without the mention of dangers to which they are exposed, of lapses to which they are liable, of evils to which they have a particular bias. In guarding against and resisting these consists their state of trial and warfare, and to their final conquest over them is promised the reward of some specific heavenly and eternal beatitude. The danger to which those whose state we are now considering is exposed is the pride of knowledge, and the undue reliance which they are tempted to place upon it, to the neglect of love and goodness. To those who overcome this child of self-love, and acquire by conquest the first love, which is love to the Lord, and do the first works, which are works of love,—to them will paradise be restored, and the tree of life which is in its midst shall be their delight and nourishment. Every one must see that paradise and the tree of life are here mentioned as images of heavenly beatitude; and that it is not even of heaven considered as a place that they are predicated, but of a certain blessed and elevated state of mind, without which no pleasantness of sense, no profusion of external enjoyment could confer beatitude. A paradise, as is well known, means a most delightful garden; and in the Word of God, or in the language of spiritual analogy, a garden is expressive of a state of exalted wisdom, which consists in having the most important and saving truths written in the heart, so that, without taxing his

memory to call them up, one sees them intuitively, and never sees or thinks of them without being spontaneously led to put them in practice. Hence those who live in paradise eat also of the tree of life. They receive true spiritual life in all abundance from the Lord, and enter into a state of the most intimate conjunction with Him, in consequence of acknowledging from their inmost heart that everything good is from Him. Thus gifted with genuine wisdom and with true heavenly life, happiness also, in a degree of which we can form no conception, is their inalienable portion ; for happiness and wisdom always go together, and both flow from the same eternal fountain, which is our blessed Lord and Saviour. Such is the reward to him who overcomes. He exchanges the garden of his own delights for the paradise of God, and the tree of knowledge for the tree of life.

8, 9. We come now to consider another state of spiritual life, as represented by the second of the seven churches. *And unto the angel of the church of Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, who was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.* The Ephesian church represents those who cultivate knowledge to the neglect of goodness ; the Smyrnian church describes those who cultivate goodness to the neglect of knowledge. Both are one-sided and imperfect characters. It is only by the union of the two elements that a true character can be formed ; and the more complete the union the more perfect the character. Truth and goodness are never perfectly equal and united in any man, nor perhaps in any angel. It is the duty of the Christian to strive to unite them as perfectly as his finite and imperfect nature will admit ; only when this duty is ignored or neglected is there cause for reproach. This reproach lies at the door of those represented by the church of Smyrna. They acknowledge the necessity of cultivating a principle of goodness in the heart, but are comparatively indifferent about truths of doctrine, conceiving that as good is the first essential of religion, it will excuse the absence of everything else. True indeed it is that good is the first essential of religion. It is, however, certain that without a union with truth there is no true goodness. Outward acts of beneficence may be done from virtuous motives, and kindly affections may be cherished in the heart ; but unless the affections are guided by the light, and the actions are directed by the laws, of truth, they are not such as can be recognised in heaven. When the Lord said, " What God hath joined together let not man put asunder," an eternal law of order which, in its spiritual

sense, has reference to the marriage of goodness and truth, He made no reference to any one particular manner of breaking this marriage more than to another, whether by establishing the tenet of faith alone, or of charity alone, but He condemned the infringement of it in any form and under any pretence whatever. The truth is that, as faith without charity is but natural knowledge, charity without faith is but natural affection, and the actions that proceed from it are unspiritual, and therefore unheavenly. As, however, most general states are divisible into two particular states, the Smyrnians, in a more favourable sense, represent those who earnestly desire to be in genuine goodness, and are anxious to possess a correct knowledge of Divine truth, but who for a time remain without it, in consequence of being without opportunities for instruction. From this cause their goodness is not genuine, though capable of becoming so.

The character of the Smyrnians will be seen from the Lord's address to them, both as He describes Himself and as He speaks of them. He announces Himself to them as the First and the Last. This expresses His infinity and eternity as to both the essentials of His Divine Essence, which are His Divine Love and Divine Wisdom. In this, as in all the other addresses to the churches, how plainly does the Lord Jesus Christ exhibit Himself as the one Supreme and only God. The terms First and Last are only applicable to the Divine Essence itself, the life and source of all things. When He adds of Himself, as the First and the Last, that He was dead and is alive, He not merely alludes, in the historical sense, to His death and resurrection; spiritually He refers to the denial of His supreme Divinity in the Christian Church, and to the restoration of this acknowledgment in His New Church, where He will again live for ever in the hearts of her members in all the honours to which He is entitled. There is still another important truth expressed in this title, one that corresponds to the exhortation to the church in Smyrna: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" but this will come out more forcibly in connection with it. It appears, from the kindness which reigns through all the Lord's address to the Smyrnians, that while their goodness is unspiritual, it is not hypocritical. Though sincere, their virtue is not as yet genuine, in consequence of their not yet being grounded in genuine truth. On this account, after saying, "I know thy works," the Divine Speaker adds, "and tribulation and poverty;" which terms describe the imperfection of their state from their good being not pure, because not united with pure truth. Truth purifies good, as good exalts truth. Good without truth is as it were in a state of widow-

hood, and experiences the tribulation of a widowhood attended with distress and poverty. The two terms, tribulation and poverty, are here combined, one to express the absence of truth, the other to indicate the consequent imperfections in the state of goodness. It is added in a parenthesis, “but thou art rich.” At once poor and rich. Poor in possession, rich in love. Like the true widow, poor in her solitariness, rich in the love which yearns after an eternal union with the absent partner of her connubial life. When there is sincere love in the heart, there is a meetness for the reception of truth, which, after the ten days’ trial and the perseverance until death, afterwards mentioned, will be united with the good that is really loved and desired, impart to it a genuine quality, and qualify its possessor for the crown of life.

But there is a danger to which these yet unperfected ones are exposed, which arises from a cause existing among themselves. “I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” This answers very nearly in form, and is in a great measure a counterpart in sense, to what is said to the church of Ephesus : “Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.” One church was in danger of being seduced by false apostles, the other of being deceived by false Jews. These are trials and dangers incident to their different states. The apostles, we have seen, as the commissioned teachers of the truths of the Gospel, mean, abstractly, those truths themselves which the Gospel contains; so that pretended apostles are false doctrines that claim to be true. Jews, as the descendants of Judah, represent not merely those who teach the doctrines of the Church, but the Church itself, as to the highest and most essential principle which constitutes it, and this is the exalted principle of pure love and goodness. As pretended apostles are false principles that claim to be true; pretended Jews are evil principles that claim to be good. Among those who make a profession of religion, no evil dare put forth such a claim openly. An evil must call itself a good, and it must even claim the support of Scripture. But as truth cannot countenance evil, the truth must be falsified, or falsely interpreted, so as to make it seem to teach, or not to condemn, what is contrary to its own pure nature. The falsification of truth is meant in the Word by blasphemy; so the Lord speaks of, and warns the members of His Church against the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. To be the synagogue of Satan is to be in a deeper and still more awful state of falsehood than to be liars. A synagogue, as being the place among the Jews for religious instruction,

denotes the doctrines taught there; and its being the synagogue of Satan implies a doctrine inspired from Satanic influence, a tissue of false persuasions originating in evil lusts. As the Ephesians represent those who make much account of the knowledges of truth, we see a peculiar propriety in their being described as being tried by, and as trying and detecting, the false doctrines meant by false apostles. And as the Smyrnians represent those who regard good as all important, without sufficiently cultivating the knowledge of truth which directs it, we see a peculiar propriety in the Smyrnians being described as being tried by evil that assumes the name and appearance of good. Those who are principled in good, but are not sufficiently aware of the value of truth, are liable to temptations which would make them believe that good stands in no need of truth, and so by degrees to believe evil to be good, and at length to confirm this perversion by direful false persuasions; for when the light of truth is entirely withdrawn, the greatest darkness must prevail as to what good really is. The importance of truth from the Word as a means of defence against and victory over evil, is shown by the authority of the highest wisdom and the sublimest example. When our Lord was tempted of the Devil to do evil, He, in every temptation, repelled the tempter by the power of Divine truth. Satan also on that memorable occasion showed how truth can be so falsified as to teach evil; for he also took Scripture as the means of his assault.

10. The trials and temptations which our Lord endured, as a means of His glorification, were the archetypes of such as His disciples must bear as a means of their regeneration. All have to pass through the same ordeal, for all have to overcome. But temptation, which is common to all, is different with each; for the nature of our trial is determined by the character of the evil or error which we have adopted or to which we are prone, and through which the temptation comes. The particular nature of the temptations required for perfecting the state of those represented by the church of Smyrna, we learn from the nature of the trials they are to suffer. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.* We have here a description of the regenerative process through which those must pass who have a sincere love of goodness, but who have no corresponding perception or even knowledge of truth, and who in consequence have fallen into the dangerous error of supposing that their

untried and undisciplined goodness is sufficient for their salvation. Salvation, like the church and heaven, is the union of goodness and truth, of charity and faith. Before good can be united in our minds with truth, a certain state of suffering is unavoidable, and this precisely in the degree that we have confirmed any false or evil principle. But if it requires a state of suffering to remove a false persuasion which we have confirmed whilst we interiorly cherished a real desire for goodness, much more must a state of suffering be requisite to eradicate any evil which we have made a part of our nature by love and practice. We are apt to suppose that any false notion which we may have entertained on any spiritual subject, may be relinquished without pain, when we are convinced of the opposite truth; and we often imagine, too, that when evil is desisted from in act, there is an end of it. We are in general little aware that everything that we confirm in our minds acquires a positive form there, and that in truth our principles of love and corresponding faith, taken together, make up our whole spiritual form, the shape and nature of every part of which depends upon the quality of some principle of our affections and thoughts. How careful then should we be what form we suffer our spiritual part to assume, by watching over the character of the affections and thoughts, of the principles of love and belief which insinuate themselves into our minds, since whatever is thus introduced induces on our spiritual organization a form suited to itself; and where a spiritual deformity is thus induced, it cannot be rectified without a process of suffering.

Yet, whatever may be the state in this respect which any of us may have reason to believe ourselves to be in, we ought not to be deterred by the certainty of suffering from submitting to the process needed for its correction. The question is, Do we really wish to be healed? Are we earnestly desirous to be brought into a state of real goodness? Is there a sincere affection for heavenly graces and virtues in the inmost of our minds? If so, the language of Divine Love is, "Fear not. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." The words imply, that where the state is such, the Lord will afford inward support amply sufficient to counterbalance any privations that may be experienced. Such encouragement the Lord is ever imparting to those who venture to encounter temptations for the sake of being brought nearer to Him. It is written repeatedly in His Word for our comfort in temptation; and when we are entering on the states to which it applies, it is intended that we should take it for our support. To all, therefore, to whom any view of the inrooted evil and false principles has been opened, and to whom, if they con-

sulted their own feelings alone, the view would be attended with despair, the Lord says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

The Divine Exhorter proceeds to say, "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." This is manifestly descriptive of a state of temptation which must be undergone to remove from those who are inwardly in a principle of good, but whose good is not pure because connected with false persuasions, those false notions which they before thought of little consequence, but of the pernicious nature of which they are now sensible. To be in prison is to be in a state in which the mind, though in the love of good, is not yet possessed of the truth which makes it free. This, however, would be no state of temptation unless there was a sense of bondage and a desire for liberty. It is when this sense and desire are awakened that there is a state of temptation. So long as the mind is content with its state there is no trial. Trial indicates, therefore, a change of state. Self-satisfaction has been succeeded by self-distrust, if not by self-abhorrence. In this state it is the inward good which, having too long neglected the truth which would have given it freedom of action, finds itself imprisoned by the errors that have gradually gathered and at last closed around it. The mind wishes to be at liberty to do what is good, and to think what is true and in agreement with the good it loves, but is unable to have a perception of it, and is held involuntarily in thoughts of an opposite kind; so it seems to itself to be nothing but evil, and to be so occupied with thoughts of evil that it appears as if it can never be otherwise. This is effected by the agency of evil spirits, who, in states of temptation, are permitted to exert such influence. This they would not be suffered to do, were there not in the tempted one evil or false principles in agreement with those infused by the tempters, but the malignity of which he never would have seen but for the exaggerations with which they are now accompanied, and which are continued till the utmost abhorrence is excited. Thus it is that their removal is effected. It is said that the tribulation should continue ten days. This cannot mean just such a measure of time; nor indeed any natural period. The duration of temptations or of any other condition of mental experience is not measured by days but by states, and these are spiritually meant by days. The number ten is used to express all or much, and here, as much as is requisite to produce the desired result. The desired result in the present case is, that truth may be added and united to goodness. And ten means all

truths, especially those revealed and contained in the ten commandments, which are a summary of all the truths of the Word, and are themselves called the ten words (Ex. xxxiv. 28). The duration of temptation depends on the readiness or reluctance with which we are brought to part with the evil or false principles which it is the design of temptation to remove; for these can only be removed by the Lord when we are willing to relinquish them. Nor is this willingness acquired at once, or by one temptation. Like Pharaoh, we are often willing while under the immediate pressure of calamity, but, like him, relapse when the trial is overpast. As with him so with every other; the temptation must be renewed till self-will is so far subdued as to consent to the Divine command. It is only, however, the Lord's people that are made sincerely and permanently willing in the day of His power, because it is only they who are disposed to be "faithful unto death." In the literal sense this precept inculcates the necessity for those who have entered on a spiritual life to continue in it to the end of their days, when their state is made up, and what it then is it will continue to be to eternity. But when faithfulness unto death is required of us, as the means of obtaining a complete victory over evil, the meaning is, that we are not to yield, or forego our trust in the Lord, till everything in us that occasions the temptation, by affording a door for evil spirits to enter, is dead,—till death has passed on all the cupidities and falsities which form the life of our natural minds. We should cheerfully submit to the death of those dreadful lusts that constitute the life of the "old man," being ready with the apostle to die daily. So dying we shall find life,—a life immeasurably surpassing in excellence and in delight that which we lay down. Considered in connection with this, how expressive and encouraging is the Lord's designation of Himself, "who was dead, and is alive." For the Lord Himself laid down the life of His maternal humanity and took up the life of His paternal Humanity. In all points He was tempted as we are. He was made perfect through sufferings. And His sufferings were endured for our sake. "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18).

As the reward of submitting to death, the Lord promises, not life only, but the crown of life. This expression is used particularly in reference to the state of those who are in good but not in corresponding truths, and is meant to imply, that when we submit to be stript of our false persuasion, and of everything that degrades and obscures the mind, truth will be united to our goodness, and we shall possess

everything requisite to our true happiness. Crowns, as being worn by kings, are emblems of that wisdom which should be the characteristic of those who govern. The precious stones with which they are enriched and adorned are emblematical of truths from the Word of which wisdom is composed, and the gold in which they are set is an emblem of that heavenly love in which truths should be grounded, and without which they cannot be constituent of true wisdom. The Divine encouragement concludes by saying, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." He who resists the evil loves and false persuasions of the natural mind, and overcomes the temptations which would lead him to submit to their domination, will for ever, not only be free from their power, but will hold them in subjection. He who thus undergoes the first death, or the death of his selfhood, will be secure from the second death, or the death of his soul. This is the only prize worthy of our most anxious exertions. It should be our constant care, by attending to the instruction here afforded us, to escape the second death, and to prepare ourselves to receive from the hand of our Saviour the crown of life.

12. The address to the church of Pergamos opens to our view another phase of the Christian life and experience, but one intimately related to those already considered, especially the last. *To the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He that hath the sharp sword with two edges.* The church of Pergamos represents those who live in the outward practice of good works, but are not in genuine truth, and are sometimes not very solicitous, provided good works be done, what the motive is from which they proceed. The difference between the church of Pergamos and the church of Smyrna is this. Those of Smyrna are more in the *love* of what is good, those of Pergamos are more in the *practice* of what is good. Both are deficient in regard to the knowledge and understanding of truth. Too little importance is attached to the acquisition of truth. Religious truth is very commonly regarded as consisting of dogmas that are simply to be believed, or to be matters of opinion, the very consideration of which has a tendency to disturb the faith and distract the mind. But truth, properly considered, is the counsellor and the guide of goodness. Truth may even be called the eye of the mind. A good disposition without truth is blind impulse; a good act without truth is blind beneficence. And while solitary good, both in disposition and in act, is unwise in its aims and objects, and therefore always imperfect and often mischievous in its effects, it is in itself marred by the natural infirmities of the heart and mind. Good actions, to be really such, must flow from

a purified heart, and be guided by an enlightened mind. If the heart is unpurified, outward deeds of benevolence are little better than acts of ostentation. To show that we must take truth with us to regulate our deeds of beneficence, and to show that unless this be done our seeming goodness will not stand the searching power of Divine truth, but, when we and our works appear before it for judgment, will be scattered and dispersed, leaving us naked and destitute to receive condemnation, the Lord, in addressing such, describes Himself as He that hath the sharp two-edged sword. That which the Lord has is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). This is certainly a most striking description of the power of Divine truth when really received in the mind; of the manner in which it distinguishes, when temptations come on, between what in us is of the Lord and what is of ourselves; and of the dispersion by it of everything that is not of heavenly origin. But why is the two-edged sword of the Lord, as an emblem of His Divine truth, mentioned here, in relation to those who make little account of truth, but who depend entirely on their good works? For this very reason. The sword of the Lord, as the emblem of His Divine truth, indicates to those who think to be saved by works alone that these are not sufficient; that truth must be combined with good in order to render it genuine; and to show that unless they proceed from a purified will and an enlightened understanding, they cannot bear the strict scrutiny which Divine truth as a penetrating sword will exercise upon them, scattering them by its presence; cutting us asunder, and appointing us a portion with the hypocrites. This is the result to those who resist the Lord's truth. But this is not the purpose of its operation. The sword of the Lord's truth is intended for our defence and deliverance. Its true and saving use is to divide what Satan has united, to break up the confederacy of sin, to separate from our goodness and truth the evil and error that may be adhering to them through our fault or infirmity. Such a state prevailed at the time our Lord came into the world, and then, as is always the case in similar circumstances, with every one at ease in Zion. The mind was lulled into a state of false security. Our Lord therefore declared that He had even come not to send peace but a sword, and that henceforth the members of man's spiritual house should be divided against each other. This is the warfare that the Lord desires to raise up, a warfare and division, not

among men, but within them. The sword and the conflict are those of which the apostle speaks. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 3-5). The sword in fact is an emblem of truth as, in temptation, it opposes our corruptions, moral and intellectual, vindicating whatever within us is good and heavenly, and separating from them whatever is evil and earthly. The present imagery teaches this further necessary truth and gives this encouraging assurance. The sword is the Lord's. It is He that fights for us. That assurance, so often repeated to Israel in their carnal warfare, that God would subdue their enemies, is the promise to the Christian that not in his own strength, but in the Lord's might, he overcomes the foes of his own household.

13. The first words addressed to this church, as to all the others, in relation to its own state is, "I know thy works." As the church of Pergamos represents those who trust to works alone for salvation, and who regard them as the only necessary elements of the Christian character, it may be useful to advert for a moment to this subject. We are liable to think of works as they appear to us, as consisting of actions, and to conclude that if men are to be judged by their works, works of the same kind will secure for all who perform them the same reward. This is a serious mistake. In regard to other men's works we see but the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the heart. He sees every most subtle emotion of the heart, even the most varying suggestion of the thoughts, which have place before the act is done, and which embody themselves in its performance. And the reason He judges man, not from his heart alone, or from his thoughts alone, or from both together, but from his works, is, because the purposes of the heart and the thoughts of the mind are not complete till they enter into some act. The act includes every affection and thought that concur in producing it, and the eye of Omniscience takes in the whole, and much that the mind itself is unconscious of. It is to imply that man's fate is not determined by his Maker from any separate part, but from his whole being, that it is so often said that he shall be judged according to his works. It is also to apprise us that we are thus entirely known to our God, from our most concealed motives of action to the actions themselves, that the Lord prefaces His address to each of the churches, by saying, *I know thy works.* In the present instance this admonition is accompanied by another, not

less calculated to awaken serious reflections in the attentive mind. The Divine Speaker proceeds to say, *And where thou dwellest.* Where we dwell, or amongst whom we live, is of little moment, except so far as we may suffer these external circumstances to influence our minds, either by inclining them towards, or withdrawing them from, things of greater importance. Where do we spiritually dwell? This is an all-important question. We spiritually dwell and find our home where our ruling love is. This determines our dwelling in eternity—in heaven if the ruling affection be good, in hell if it be evil. Even while we live in this world we are in one or other of these—in the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness. The Lord knows where we are, in what state we are, what is our prevailing love. “I know where thou dwellest.” Solemn is this assurance. Yet, how seldom and lightly may we think of it! Whilst we live here, enjoying perhaps the outward pleasures of life, and gratifying, it may be, all the desires of the natural mind, we are willing to find excuse for our irregularities, or at least to conceal them from the eyes of the world. And while doing this we are often blind ourselves to the real nature of our dominant love, and think indulgence allowable, or counterbalanced by some outwardly good deeds that save our worldly reputation, though they cannot save our soul. If this is our state, we are inwardly bound to our like in the kingdom of darkness where in spirit we dwell. Although we would gladly avoid the ultimate and eternal consequences, it will be impossible unless we timely repent. The Lord, who knows where we dwell, would willingly rescue us from the abode of misery, but He can only do so in agreement with the laws prescribed by His own Divine Order, which are immutable, and which require the sinner to desist from the practice of such evils as are the offspring of an evil love, and resist the evil love itself with devout aspirations for Divine assistance. If this is a consideration that tends to act upon our natural fears, and to prompt us merely from a regard to our own interest to flee in time from the dark caverns which are the proper abode of every concupiscence, the same Divine assurance, that the Lord knows where we dwell, is equally adapted to afford us encouragement after we have seriously set our affections on higher things, and to prevent us from being overwhelmed by any of the difficulties which may at any time oppose our progress. If our inmost desires are really occupied with heavenly things, the abode of our spirit is in heaven; and though there may be much that requires to be removed in the external mind before we are qualified for our heavenly country, yet there, we may be assured, our home really is. Temptations may have

to be endured, and various anxieties may distress us while under them ; still there is our home ; and if we look steadfastly to the Captain of our salvation, and follow His leading, there we shall assuredly come at last.

Temptations must come through the serious errors with which the church of Pergamos is charged, and as a means of removing them. It is said of them that their dwelling is *where Sutan's seat is*, or, more correctly, where his throne is. Satan is a word that means an adversary. This name is applied to evil spirits, collectively called Satan and the Devil, chiefly in reference to their opposition to the Lord's Divine truth, and as the origin of all falsehood and infidelity ; as the term Devil is applied to evil spirits in reference to their opposition to the Lord's Divine goodness, and as the origin of all evil and malignity. Where mention is made in Scripture of the Devil and his operations, the subject treated of is evil lusts ; and where mention is made of Satan, the subject treated of is false persuasions ; and both of these as excited by evil spirits. When, therefore, mention is here made of the throne of Satan, it means where false persuasions of the most destructive nature bear sway. It is plain, however, that although they of Pergamos are said to dwell where Satan's throne is, or where destructive false persuasions bear rule, it does not mean that they are themselves principled in such persuasions, because it is immediately added, that they *hold fast the Lord's name, and have not denied his faith*, which they must have done if they were principled in such destructive opinions. The meaning, therefore, is, that those who are in the practice of good works without being in truths of doctrine, are surrounded by those who are in such dangerous errors, and are themselves in a state of great obscurity, and are exposed in consequence to severe trials and temptations. But while surrounded by error and darkness, they still have that which preserves them in communion with their Saviour, and enables Him to sustain them in their temptations. *Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith.* The name of the Lord always means His nature ; and His nature is Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, or Divine Goodness and Divine Truth. In the highest sense the Lord's name means His Divine Humanity ; for in His Humanity the Divine nature dwells : in His Humanity God is known, and in it God is the object of love and faith and, therefore, of worship. When it is said of those represented by the church of Pergamos that they hold fast the Lord's name, it means that those who make good works the essential of religion and doctrine, are in the Lord's Divine sphere of Love and Wisdom, and in the interior acknowledgment of His Divine Humanity, although they may be in

possession of but few truths respecting Him. And when it is added that they do not deny His faith, it implies that they do not lose their reverence for His Divine Word, which is the source of all faith to those who study it, and who in consequence retain a dependence on and trust in the Lord. By way of further commendation, it is said, that they hold fast the Lord's name, and had not denied His faith, *even in the days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.* Antipas is said to have suffered martyrdom in the reign of Domitian, in the early days of Christianity, for testifying his faith in the Divinity and saving power of Jesus Christ. Therefore he is here mentioned, not merely in commemoration of him as an individual man, but as a type of the faith which acknowledges the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity. Those who hold the Lord's name and do not deny His faith, even in the days in which Antipas is His martyr, are those who are really principled in good works, and are therefore faithful to their Lord even whilst the Divinity of His Humanity is generally denied, as is very much the case at the present day. For not only is the Lord Jesus believed to be as to His Divinity personally distinct from the Father, but His human nature is supposed to be finite, like the body of an ordinary man, made spiritual by the resurrection from the dead !

14, 15. While those whose character we have endeavoured to describe are preserved within the sphere of the Divine protection, they are yet more or less in the errors into which those who view the whole of religion as consisting in good works are apt to fall. These are meant by the charges brought against the church of Pergamos. *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.* The Scripture account of Balaam is a singular one. A magician and soothsayer of Mesopotamia, he appears to have studied occult sciences merely as a profession, and to have been ready to employ his skill in agreement with the wishes of any employer. He was therefore sent for by the king of Moab to impede the march of the Israelites by his incantations. The Lord interfered in a miraculous manner so as to convert his intended curse into a blessing, and Balaam himself seemed willing to concur in it. Yet when the Divine influence under which he acted was over, he endeavoured to frustrate his own prediction. He counselled Balac to proceed with subtlety, and by the fascinations of the young Moabitish women to allure the sons of Israel to idolatry. In this he succeeded, and the result was a plague which

destroyed many thousands of the people. From this circumstance those who belong to the Lord's Church, which Israel typified, may learn this most important lesson, that they never can be hurt by the devices of their spiritual foes, even by the powers of darkness, except by their own consent. According to the history, it appears, therefore, that the Israelites trespassed by worshipping the idol gods of the Moabites, offering them sacrifices, and contracting unlawful connections with the Moabitish women. But how does this apply to the present case? How can Christians be said to hold the doctrine of Balaam, or to be seduced by his counsels? Because those who are in good without truth are easily seduced by those who are in truth without good. Ignorant simplicity is no match for ingenious wickedness. Truth is the necessary protector of goodness. The simplicity of the dove must be supplemented by the wisdom of the serpent. Yet it is because unenlightened good is tainted with evil that it is liable to be seduced. And the Israelites were seduced through the allurements of the Moabitish women, to teach us that those very affections which exist in connection with natural goodness are the channels through which natural goodness is allured to the commission of evil. The Moabites represented those who cherish good or kind affections from a natural origin, as from birth or natural constitution. Such good is never real, being unconnected with spiritual considerations, and defiled by admixture with evils, which are glossed over by bland and insinuating manners. To eat of things offered to the Moabitish idols is to worship God from natural affections alone. This is not Divine worship. The worship of God is the adoration of the Supreme Goodness, and the exaltation of that goodness into the supreme affection of the heart. This alone is true worship. Worship from natural affection alone is Moabitish worship. To think to worship God from natural affection alone, and to think to do good without desisting from evil, is the error into which those who suppose that the all of salvation depends on good works without taking any concern about doctrine, are liable to fall; and from which nothing can effectually secure them but such a share of the light of truth as may serve to point out what good works really are, and to caution them against mistaking for good works the fruits of a merely natural disposition. Another error to which persons who think the whole of religion consists in the practice of good works are liable is, that they merit heaven by the good which they do. This is the error condemned under the name of the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes: wherefore the Lord says, *So hast thou also the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes; which thing I hate.* These Nicolaitanes denote

those who entirely separate charity and faith, and who regard the works done by men as having merit in them. This is a mistake common to all who separate faith and charity, whether they think to be saved by faith alone or by charity alone. When once charity and faith, or good and truth, are separated, neither is from the Lord; and whether we hold the doctrine of good separate from truth, or truth separate from good,—whether we think to be saved by faith alone or by works alone, we regard works as meritorious. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants entertain this opinion; and on this same ground one church maintains, and the other rejects, works as means of salvation. Genuine truth teaches that everything really good and true is from the Lord; and although it instructs us also that we have power to abstain from evil and do good as of ourselves, yet it teaches that this very power is of God alone, and is imparted to us every moment. Where then is the merit? To claim merit for what God gives us both the will and the power to do, is to claim for ourselves what is the Lord's.

16. It is in consideration of the two fatal mistakes to which those are liable who ascribe the power of salvation to works alone, that the Lord says to the church of Pergamos, *Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of My mouth.* From this we are taught the necessity of departing from the notion that good works, without regard to their motive, can secure salvation; and are informed that unless Divine truth, which is the sword of the Lord's mouth, be received and employed by us to correct our errors and oppose our evils, it will come against us, and separate us from the kingdom of righteousness, which we mistakenly supposed might be attained without it. Let us ever remember that the Lord does not fight against us, but only against that in us which is opposed to His truth, and therefore to our true and eternal interests; and that it is only when we so identify these with ourselves that they cannot be separated from us, that the sword which was intended to fall upon and separate our corruptions from us, falls upon ourselves, and separates us eternally from God, the only Good and the only True, who can have no communion with evil and falsehood.

17. If, however, we attend to the Divine admonition, and remove evil and error, and unite truth with our good, and steadily and diligently practise good works under its enlightened and holy influence, we are instructed that a very exalted state of heavenly glory is before us; for the Lord says, *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the*

stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. By these words we are instructed, that he who learns truths and applies them to life, and who thus makes the performance of good works his ruling object, and does them from a purified heart and an enlightened understanding, will become after death an inhabitant of the highest heaven. Manna is emblematical of a principle of the purest love with its accompanying wisdom, descending from the Lord. For those whose good works have been united to truths of doctrine, come in the other life into the highest wisdom. But theirs is hidden wisdom; not the wisdom of the memory, nor even of the intellect, but of the heart and inner life; not the wisdom that is drawn up like water from the well, but the wisdom that springs up like water from the fountain, ever living and ever active. Besides the hidden manna, there is the white stone. Where there is real good in the heart, it eagerly looks out for, and claims as its own, such truth as is adapted to promote its ends; and all real truth gives its testimony to the excellence of such good. Truth is the law of life; and the perfect character is formed by having the law written in the heart. "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall no more teach, for they shall all know" (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34). It is in reference to this character of them, as having the law of God, or the truths of the Holy Word, written in their hearts, and not laid up in the memory, that on the stone a new name was written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it; which plainly means the newness of character, which those who are in the practice of good works will acquire, when their good is united to truth, and their works are done from the spirit and not from the flesh, and in the spirit and not in the letter. It is from this inward reception of the truth that the writing of the law upon the heart is called the new covenant,—not new as regards the law, but new as regards the place it occupies. The law, formerly written on the memory, now engraven on the heart, has in it a new name, a new character. It is no longer a rule of action, but a principle of life. It no longer imposes an outward duty, but gives an inward delight; for all true happiness arises from inward conformity with God, and the more complete this conformity is the more perfect the happiness. This happiness no man knows but he who has inwardly received it in the pure law of truth.

18. The church of Thyatira, which we now come to consider, describes a phase of the religious character very different from those which have already come under our notice. In the church of

Ephesus we have those who lay great stress upon doctrine, but are not equally solicitous about love and life: in the church of Smyrna we have those who give the palm to love, but who are not sufficiently careful to acquire the truth which should direct it; and in the church of Pergamos we have those who lightly esteem both love and truth, and are of those who think "he can't be wrong whose life is in the right." Briefly, the first three churches represent those who are in faith alone, in charity alone, and in works alone. The church of Thyatira symbolizes those in whom these three are united; strictly, those who are in faith grounded in charity, and in whom, in consequence, the inner and outer man are in a state of conjunction. It is true there is a danger to which even these are exposed; but those who overcome the error which conceals the danger, may with propriety be held up as examples of what we all should be most solicitous to obtain.

19. Jesus thus announces Himself to the church of Thyatira: *These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.* The Lord appears to every one according to His state. On this principle He describes Himself variously to the churches. To the church of Thyatira He introduces Himself as the Son of God, because this is especially the name of His Divine Humanity. For the Son of God does not mean an eternally begotten Son, whom some regard as a second person of the Trinity. The human nature, or the man, born of the Virgin Mary was the Son of God, because God was His Father; so that even from conception Jesus was the Son of God and His only begotten. But He was the Son of God, and of God alone, as being no longer the Son of Mary, when He was glorified, for He rose from the dead with a Humanity not only begotten but born of God, that is, re-born; for the Lord, as a man, was glorified as we are regenerated. As our re-birth makes us sons of God, the Lord's re-birth made Him the Son of God. As we, by regeneration, put off the old man and put on the new, Jesus, by glorification, put off all the infirm and finite humanity He derived from His human mother, and put on the perfect and infinite humanity from His Divine Father. What is wholly from God must be wholly Divine. Therefore that which the Lord now has is a Divine Humanity, which is truly the Son of God. It is this Humanity whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and whose feet are as fine brass. His eyes are His infinite wisdom, the fire is His infinite love. His eyes are not said to be like fire, but like a flame of fire; for His wisdom proceeds from His love as flame arises from fire. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zec. iv. 10); for His wisdom sees and provides for

all the states of mankind. And so also "His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men" (Ps. xi. 4); for the Lord's wisdom sees, that He may remove, evil as well as provide good. But the Lord's feet are mentioned as well as His eyes. As the Lord's eyes are the symbols of His wisdom, His feet are the symbols of His power, or of what in Scripture is called His way. "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet" (Nahum i. 3). But wherever it is, the way of the Lord is perfect (Ps. xviii. 30). His feet are like fine brass. Pure goodness is the characteristic of all the Divine operations. When, therefore, it is said of the Son of God that His eyes are as a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass, the meaning is, that the Lord's wisdom is the omniscience of love, and His power is the omnipotence of pure goodness. But we are to regard the Lord's description of Himself, not so much as it relates to Him personally, as to the church which is addressed. And from the meaning of the characteristics by which the Lord describes Himself to the church of Thyatira, we see how beautifully His address is adapted to the persons this church represents. As we have stated, it represents those who are inwardly in faith derived from charity, and outwardly in a corresponding life. These have no longer a law in their members warring against the law of God in their mind: this mind and their members are now in harmony, the members doing what the mind commands. Such being the characteristics of the persons addressed, we see how appropriately the Lord announces Himself to them as the Author of the loving wisdom which is the ruling principle of their minds, and of the unalloyed goodness which is the practice of their lives. For when the Lord announces Himself as He whose eyes are like a flame of fire, He intimates, in the expressive language of correspondence, that all faith grounded in charity is derived from Him alone, in whom infinite Wisdom is united with infinite Love; and when He adds that His feet are like fine brass, He apprises us that a good outward life in agreement with good inward principles is from Him also. He is to us eyes to see and feet to walk. We are wise by His Wisdom, loving by His Love, righteous by His Righteousness. The Lord is all this to us when faith and charity are united in our minds, and works of faith and charity are the habitual practice of our lives.

19. The particulars which the Lord notices in His address to such persons will enable us to discern their character still more clearly, and see what we must do to realize it ourselves. He says to them, *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and*

thy works; and the lust to be more than the first. This language is so plain that it seems to require no explanation, and not to admit of a spiritual interpretation. There is, however, a natural and a spiritual principle in all things; and therefore there is a natural and a spiritual meaning in all the terms by which they are expressed. The natural man has a natural idea of that to which the spiritual man attaches a spiritual idea. For there is natural and there is spiritual charity, and service, and faith, and patience, and works. It is obvious that they are here to be understood in their spiritual character, as they exist in greater or less perfection in the minds of the faithful; and in this aspect we are to regard them. Charity is love to the neighbour, but all love to the neighbour is not charity. Charity is disinterested love. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them" (Luke vi. 32). Yet there is a sense in which all neighbourly love is charity. In the purely spiritual sense good from the Lord is our neighbour. Accordingly the Lord, who is Goodness itself, is in the highest sense our Neighbour, and is to be loved supremely. But it has a more practical form. Charity, as exercised towards each other, is the love of what is good in each other; and as all good is from the Lord, charity is the love of God in man. Hence our Lord said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matt. xxv. 40). This is spiritual charity—to love what is good in men, whatever their creed or country, their rank or character. On this principle we can love our enemies as well and as sincerely as our friends; for in this way we love what is good in our enemies, and do not love evil in our friends. This is the charity which the Lord approvingly knows. He also knows our service. This, properly, means ministry. Ministers and servants are distinguished in the Word, and have a distinct meaning. Ministers are those who act from the promptings of goodness, and servants are those who act from the dictates of truth. The Lord says, "Whosoever would be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant." This is not a distinction without a difference; for it relates to those who serve the Lord from a principle of good in the will, and those who serve from a principle of truth in the understanding. Thus, the charity which the Lord commands is the spiritual love of goodness which reigns interiorly in the mind of the regenerate man; and the ministry which He commands in connection with it, is the practice of the good which is loved. The same relation exists between faith and patience. Faith refers to that enlightened perception

of truth which, in the state here referred to, illuminates the interior of the understanding; and patience is that resigned confidence which is outwardly exercised and experienced when the Christian yields himself up, without any solicitude as to the event, to the leadings of the Lord's providence. So again, when works are twice mentioned, the same distinction is observed. Works always belong to the outward life, or are expressive of active life. But there is this distinction in the present case. The first works are those which are done in the beginning of regeneration, from a motive of simple obedience; and the last works, which are more than the first, are those that follow when the mind is inwardly opened, and works are performed from motives of love and charity, and are thus filled with heavenly principles.

20. As the other churches we have considered, so of the church of Thyatira, commendation is followed by admonition and warning. *Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* This serious charge is not to be understood as brought against all indiscriminately who belong to this church. As a collective body they are to be considered as having such wicked pretenders among them, from whose contagious influence they require to be delivered, either by the reformation or separation of its corrupted members. That the censures and denunciations which follow are not intended for those good members whose state is first described, is evident from its being afterwards said, "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." Nor therefore to those who are in charity, faith, and good works does the charge of listening to the woman Jezebel apply, but to a class who have no just claim to so excellent a character. The literal sense speaks of the woman Jezebel; but the spiritual sense knows nothing of any individual woman, nor does it treat of those natural evils of which this woman Jezebel is here said to be the author. That the woman Jezebel, as introduced into this prophetic book, cannot mean any particular woman must be evident. It is equally clear that she must be the symbol of some destructive principle which seeks admission into the human mind and, when admitted, strives to turn it, by its delusive insinuations, from the true worship of the Lord. And if this is meant by this prophetic Jezebel, the historical Jezebel, though a real person, must have been a

representative character, a living type of the same destructive principle. The principle of which Jezebel was the type is in exact contrast to that which the true Thyatirian represents ; for every right principle is tempted and tried by that which is exactly opposed to it. The church of Thyatira represents those who are in faith grounded in charity ; Jezebel represents faith entirely separated from charity, and, understood of persons, those who are Solifidians both in doctrine and practice, who maintain that if faith saves, evil does not condemn. In fact, Jezebel, as being the wife of Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, and described as stirring him up to the commission of crimes which rendered his reign infamous, represents more especially those evil lusts of the natural mind, the delights of which bear a man away to the practice of sin, and cause him intellectually to adopt the soothing lie that he may be saved by faith ; thus she represents the delight of evil as the prompting cause of a dead and corrupting faith. How aptly this wicked queen represented a principle so destructive of everything that constitutes the Church, was represented by her seizing, through violence and deceit, the vineyard of Naboth ; and how destructive of every truth of the Word, and of the Word itself, was represented by her killing the prophets who represented the truths and doctrines of the Word, and her seeking the death of Elijah, who represented the Word itself ! Her whole history was a type of the character and doings of unbridled cupidity acting under the shadow of religion, and her dismal end of the terrible consequences of such a state adopted in principle and confirmed by practice. The Jezebel of the Book of Revelation is in some respects different from her of the Book of Kings. There is nothing said of Ahab's queen calling herself a prophetess. Prophets, as just observed, represent the doctrines of truth derived from the Word ; and also those who teach them, and all who are principled in them. When, therefore, Jezebel, as a type of those who are in faith alone, grounded in the delight of natural love, is called a prophetess, the meaning is, that they affirm this to be the true doctrine of the Church. When she is said to teach and to seduce the Lord's servants, the meaning is, that those who might be principled in the truth are thus carried away and led to regard what is false as true, and what is good as evil ; the teaching of Jezebel having reference to the insinuation of false principles as true, and her seducing to the infusing of evil affections as good, and, abstractly, to the perversion of the truths of the Word themselves. And to what were they led by the exercise upon them of this seduction ? To commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. This same charge is brought against the church of Smyrna. That church was misled by Balaam, this by

Jezebel; that was assailed through the thoughts, this through the passions; that was led first to idolatry, and then to fornication; this was led first to fornication, and then to idolatry; for the same reason, that with one class of persons false teachers corrupt the passions through the thoughts, with another they seduce the thoughts through the passions. We formerly explained the meaning of these two sins. Marriage, we have seen, is the union of goodness and truth; fornication is the conjunction of truth and evil. To eat things sacrificed to God is to receive into the heart good which truth has sanctified; to eat things sacrificed to idols is to receive into the heart good which falsehood has profaned. The unhallowed connection of the sacred and the profane is effected by what is true and what is good being perverted from their true order. Truth cannot be united with evil without being first falsified; and this is done when any false gloss is put upon it by which its force is evaded. For instance, it is constantly said in Scripture that men are to shun evil and do good by keeping the commandments. One may consent to this as a truth and yet live in sin, but he does not, by simply doing so, falsify the truth. But let him yield to the persuasion that no man since the Fall can obey the Divine Law, and that Jesus Christ has fulfilled it in his stead, and he changes the truth into a lie; and if, under the sanction of this doctrine, he lives as one not under the moral law, he is guilty of the crime to which the spiritual Jezebel entices her disciples. Spiritual fornication is coupled with eating things sacrificed unto idols. Instead of being worshippers of God we become worshippers of self; instead of sacrificing to God we sacrifice to our own lusts, which we seek to gratify.

21. But the Lord is ever acting and teaching so as to counteract the errors and influences that would seduce His people. Even of the wicked prophetess He says, *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.* Two momentous truths are here placed before us. The Lord desires that even such as Jezebel should be saved. In this world the door of repentance is never shut. Yet those who have plunged deep in wickedness too often repent not. And no state is less hopeful than that of those who have turned the truth aside, and made it their accomplice in the commission of sin. The truth which is falsified is seldom so entirely perverted but that her still small voice may be heard when the tumult of the passions has at any time subsided. The Divine Mercy provides that in this life there shall be time to repent, and, still more, state, which time represents; not necessarily a state of penitence,

for this must be chosen, but a state of freedom, which is never taken away, and which is aided by the memory of early impressions and innocent states of mind, and by a thousand considerations that during the course of life press in upon the immortal soul.

22, 23. Among the considerations which press in upon the soul, if not entirely insensible to the realities of a future life, are those of the judgment to come, which are now described. *Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* Although those represented by Jezebel herself refuse to repent, yet those who have been seduced by her appear to be more capable of turning from sin. The singular punishment or result of her sin—being cast into a bed—is sufficiently terrible when spiritually interpreted. A bed, as being that on which one reposes, represents the natural mind, on which the interiors rest, as the body on a bed: it also represents doctrine which every one forms for himself from the Word; and doctrine is the truth of the Word, so arranged and digested as to be seen and acquiesced in even by the natural mind. It frequently happened that when the Lord healed the sick, He told them to take up their bed and walk, which represented that elevation of the natural man and his doctrine, which is a result of acknowledging the Lord's Divinity and receiving His life-giving influences. To be cast into a bed, must mean a state directly the opposite of this—a state of mental degradation, the immersion of all its thoughts and affections in sensual lusts, and an entire acquiescence in the erroneous views of doctrine which the natural man frames for himself. Those who confirm themselves in this state are cast, or rather cast themselves, into the bed of sensuality and falsehood, into which they sink deeper and deeper till they make their bed in hell. So deep is this falsity, that those who have been seduced into giving it their practical approval, are cast into great tribulation. This is not the tribulation of temptation, but the unrest and anguish of persistent error and evil, and is threatened against those who do not repent. Repentance saves from this troubled state. It has the further effect of depriving of life and power the errors which are the offspring of corrupt affections, which is meant by killing the children, or sons, of Jezebel with death. "Happy shall he be," says the Psalmist, apostrophizing Babylon, "who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Ps. cxxxvii. 9). When the falsity of evil is

brought to the test of truth grounded in goodness, the result is certain, and the reward happiness. By killing the children of Jezebel with death, all the churches were to know that the Lord is He who searcheth the heart and the reins. This character, in which Jesus announces Himself, shows His identity with Jehovah, who in the Old Testament describes Himself in the very same terms; and who else indeed can be the searcher of hearts? It clearly indicates, too, that the subjects of these addresses are purely spiritual, and relate to the trials of the Christian life. But what is the nature of these, this searching, and these trials? The heart is the fountain of the blood; the reins serve for its purification. These organs of the body answer to the will and intellect of the mind. When it is said, therefore, that the Lord searches the reins and the heart, we are instructed, not only that He sees and knows, but that He gives us also to see and know, the state of our will and intellect. We indeed can never know them as He knows them; but unless He knew them perfectly, we could never have even the measure of knowledge respecting them we are able to possess. This is a truth that concerns all the churches. A Divine Examiner explores the heart and reins of all; tries the character of every desire that is cherished by the will, and of every thought that is entertained by the understanding. This is an examination which none can shun, and which nothing can elude; and since the whole mind and life lie open to the Lord, how important is it that we should not remain strangers to ourselves, but that we should be diligent in the work of self-examination. Thus only can we be secured against, or delivered from, the seductions of the false prophetess that seeks to allure, and finds some sympathetic chord in every heart. Therefore this warning is to all the churches.

24, 25. After describing the seductions to which the church of Thyatira is more especially liable, and to which some of its members yield, the Lord addresses Himself to those who have withstood the allurement, and says, *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.* The doctrine spoken of is that which we have already considered as the teaching of Jezebel; and the depths of Satan, which are now added, are the cunning perversions of the Word and reasonings from the natural mind, by which false notions are made to appear as true, and a persuasion is induced, though not directly taught, that sensual desires may be freely gratified without prejudice to salvation. Happy are they who have not known

the depths of such a doctrine—who have not entered deeply into its mysteries and subtleties, so as to be led away from the path of truth into that of error. To them the Lord says, “I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have, hold fast till I come.” It may at first sight appear as if those who are in faith from charity, and are aware of the necessity of a corresponding life, could be in no danger of falling into such gross perversions as those typified by Jezebel and her practices. But no principles and state of life are absolutely confirmed till regeneration is completed, which it can scarcely ever be while we remain below; and until we are safely at rest in the heavenly mansions, there is always a possibility of falling under the power of the enemy, though the probability is diminished by every step that is really taken in a heavenward direction. But the exhortation to hold fast that which they have, is not only addressed to those who have acquired the heavenly graces of charity and faith, but likewise to all who have become convinced of their excellence, and desire their attainment. And with these the pleasures of the false prophetess may possess considerable charms. But, indeed, we all have a seductive Jezebel within, against whose machinations continual watchfulness is required. It is not the doctrine only, but the life of truth that is our safeguard. We know that the pleasures of sense, not prohibited by any Divine precept, are no more criminal when enjoyed by the spiritual man than by the natural man. But the most apparently innocent things become sinful when they occupy a place in the affections that properly belongs to higher objects, and when they tend to lead us to the neglect of positive duties. It should be our care to attain the heavenly graces which constitute real wealth and yield true happiness, and, when attained, to hold them fast against all the allurements of the natural mind; and then, when the Lord comes to us individually, to summon us to judgment, we shall attend the call with joy, knowing that happiness awaits us.

26–28. The reward of holding fast what we have, and resisting all temptation to let it go, is now set before us. *And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star.* To overcome implies resistance to evil, and to keep the Lord’s works unto the end implies perseverance in good. But the promise. What can be meant by each individual conqueror and persistent worker receiving power over the nations, and ruling them with a rod of iron? This is a power

which no Christian can either expect or desire literally to possess ; and the promise cannot be in any degree literally understood, since it would tend to encourage the love of dominion over others, and a disposition to exercise cruelty. But when we know that all spiritual conquest is self-conquest, and that all spiritual rule is self-rule, we can see that the promise must be understood in conformity with this principle. We have had occasion to point out the fact that the purely spiritual sense of the Word has no reference to persons, but relates entirely to principles as they exist in the individual mind. The nations over which the conquering Christian receives power are the evils of his own heart. Nations and peoples, so often mentioned in Scripture, are symbolical of principles either good and true, or evil and false. In this instance, it is evident the nations are symbolical of evils, since they are opposed to the Divine authority and to the interests of His people. To receive power over the nations is to be enabled, by the Lord's power, to keep in subjection all the evils of our nature ; and not only the evils of the outward but of the inward life,—evils of intention, from which evil acts spring. The means by which they are to be controlled is not less significant than the nations themselves. A rod is the symbol of power, and iron is the symbol of natural truth, not truth which we learn from nature, nor even relating to natural things, but revealed truth, as expressed in natural language, and adapted to the natural apprehensions of men. To rule the nations, therefore, is to rebuke, control, and expel the evils of the natural mind by the power of truth drawn from the literal sense of the Word, and seen clearly even in rational and natural light. If ever our evils are to be subdued, in this way must their subjugation be effected. All evils reside in the natural mind ; and it is impossible to dislodge them unless Divine truth be brought to bear upon them, and this must be such truth as is suited to that part of the mind where they reside. By ruling the nations with a rod of iron is meant the power of detecting sophistries by which the natural man glosses over the evils in which he delights. However ingenious they may be, truth from the Word, even the lowest and simplest, has power to disperse them, “as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again” (Jer. xix. 11). And the Lord adds, by way of encouragement, that the power thus promised shall be received by the faithful, both because, and in the same manner as, He received such power from the Father. This same image is employed to describe prophetically the Lord's power over His enemies ; “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the

heathen," or nations, "for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. ii. 8). Not the nations of the earth, but the evils He inherited from His fallen mother, were the powers the Lord overcame. His work was in this respect like ours, or rather our work is like His; for we are regenerated as He was glorified; and it is because He received power from the Father, that we can receive power from Him to overcome all evil. This truth is the grandest for us that the Word of God contains. It is the foundation of our faith, the ground of our hope, the pattern of our entire regenerative work. The final blessing which the Lord pronounces is that He will give us the morning star. All the stars are emblematical of the knowledges of heavenly truth, which are the means of conducting to wisdom; and the morning star in particular is the emblem of the wisdom thus acquired; and this wisdom is called the morning star, on account of the superior brightness of the star that announces the approach of day, and because in the Word the morning, like the east, means a state of love and charity. The Lord calls Himself the bright and morning star (Rev. xxii. 16), as being Wisdom itself, and the Source of it to the Church and to men. He is the dayspring from on high, who visits us, to give light to them that are in darkness, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

CHAPTER III.

1, 2. A CLASS of professing Christians, very different from any of those we have yet considered, is represented by the church of Sardis. *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* The very brief description of their character conveys at once a very clear idea of the religious state of those they represent. As the character in which the Lord presents Himself to the churches has relation to the character of those they represent, we must first attend to the images He employs. As the seven churches represent the whole Church, as it consists of the different classes of persons in Christendom who have any religion, the seven spirits of God are the one Divine Spirit, as it adapts itself to, and is received by, persons in different religious states. As seven is a holy number, whether we say the seven spirits or the Holy Spirit, the meaning is precisely the same. The stars, we have seen, are the

knowledges of goodness and truth as revealed in God's Word. The difference between the seven spirits and the seven stars is this. The seven spirits are the life of Divine truth which is infused into the mind of the regenerate man by an interior way, and the seven stars are the knowledges which he acquires outwardly by studying the written Word. Much the same relation subsists between the seven stars and the seven spirits, as between the water and the spirit, by which a man is said to be born again,—water being symbolical of the truth which the regenerate receive by instruction and study, and which they employ in the purification of the outward life, the spirit including every thing that constitutes the spirit of religion in the mind. The Lord next proceeds to address to this church His usual admonition, "I know thy works;" and He finds by inspection that those who belong to it have a name to live, and yet are dead. It is clear that the persons addressed are those who attend to the externals of religion and morality, but are not under the influence of any principle of spiritual life. They are nominal Christians. They have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 5). It is only the eye of Omniscience that can see this. We judge by the outward appearance; the Lord looketh on the heart. The nominal and the real Christian both attend to the outward duties of religion; but one is inwardly dead, the other is inwardly alive. Such being the character of those represented by the church of Sardis, we can see the significance of the character in which the Lord addresses them. To those who are equally indifferent to the knowledge which instructs and the spirit which animates, the Lord announces Himself as He that has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, to intimate how those who are dead are to be quickened, which is by receiving the spirit and the knowledge of truth. And they must receive them from the Lord who hath them, and is thus their Source and Giver. For although the spirit comes immediately from the Lord, and we acquire the knowledge of truth mediately through His Word, yet is Jesus the Origin and Author of both; and neither can be received aright unless they are traced and ascribed to Him. The state which we are considering is frequently spoken of in Scripture. It is the state of those who are at ease in Zion, who say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." The Divine Speaker therefore exhorts them, saying, *Be watchful.* When we now speak of watching, we mean to observe steadfastly; but if we wish to exhort any person not to go to sleep, we never tell him to watch or be watchful; yet this is the meaning which the term always bears. Watching in Scripture is not so much attention as contrasted with inattention, as of waking as contrasted

with sleeping. When the Lord in His temptation in Gethsemane, on coming to His disciples found them sleeping, He said to them, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" meaning, Could you not keep awake one hour? How striking an image does this present of the difference between the merely natural state, when represented as a state of sleep, and the state they are exhorted to preserve, when it is understood as a state of wakefulness! The spiritual meaning of a state of sleep is a state of natural life, as distinguished from a state of spiritual life. Of course wakefulness, to which the church of Sardis is exhorted, must be spiritual life as distinguished from natural. The state of sleep is indeed a most apt emblem of the condition of one who is wholly immersed in pursuits which have this world alone for their object. It is a certain truth that he who gives the reins too far to his inclinations is in danger of becoming their slave for ever, which is what the Psalmist prays against when he says, "Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." To lighten the eyes is to enlighten the understanding with spiritual knowledge, which is the only way to awaken one to a sense of the real character of his merely natural state, and show him the danger of making this state permanent by a continued devotedness of the affections to temporal objects. The proper remedy for such a state must be, to arouse from such sleep to a state of spiritual wakefulness, which is spiritually to live. The immediate consequence of coming into such a state of wakefulness is described to be, to *strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die.* The things that remain are the things still possessed by those who have some communication with heaven, and which are common to them and to those who are in a better state, and these are, the externals of worship and morality. These are said to be ready to die, to indicate that what is of the external man, without an inward essence, being unconnected with the eternal source of life, cannot be permanent. It may endure for a time, and be tolerated by the Lord to give opportunity for amendment; but if not strengthened by an inward principle, it will finally perish. Like the green bay tree, to which the Psalmist compares the specious appearance of the wicked, it is soon to wither, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But if the man awakens to a sense of his condition, and comes to a state of spiritual wakefulness, the things which he has are strengthened. They are no longer mere husks as before. They have a sound kernel within. From being appearances they become realities; and receive strength by being connected with Him who alone is permanent in Himself, and the Author of permanence in His creation. He never slumbers nor

sleeps; He alone liveth. From Him therefore our wakefulness and our life come. The reason for the exhortation to those represented by the church of Sardis to be wakeful, and to strengthen the things that are ready to die, is stated to be, that their works have not been found perfect before God. Literally, the passage reads, *I have not found thy works full before God.* How beautifully and strongly does this describe the nature of the specious and fair-seeming but empty works, which are here intended to be reproved! Works may be imperfect in a variety of ways. It may be truly said of the best of the works of men and of angels that they are not perfect before God; for God chargeth His angels with folly, and the heavens are not pure in His sight. But when the Lord tells the men of Sardis that their works are not full before God, however perfect they may have seemed before men, He gives a character to their works descriptive of the exact nature of their pretensions, and suitable to them alone. Works are never indeed empty. If they are not full of the love of God and the neighbour, they are full of the love of self and the world. But nothing is full in the sight of God, or when seen in the light of His truth, but what is full of His love and goodness.

3. To those whose works God has found to be not empty, but not full, He gives the exhortation, *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.* To remember what we have received and heard is to call to mind, and not only to call to mind but to bring into the heart, the truths of the Word which we have learnt, and which we profess to believe and attend to. To hold fast, or, as it should be rendered, to keep, them, is to make them the guides of our thoughts and lives; and to repent is to turn from a state of empty profession, and submit to the change and renewal of mind necessary to make us in reality what before we only outwardly seemed to be. If we do not watch and repent, the Lord will come as a thief. In this, and in several other instances, the Lord compares His Coming to perform judgment, both on the perverted church in general and on its members in particular, to the unnoticed depredations of a thief. We are warned by this image of the certain but imperceptible manner in which all the knowledges of Divine things which we may possess, and indeed everything that gives us the appearance of members of the Church, will pass out of the mind, or be abandoned by us, unless they have obtained a root in our hearts, and have acquired life by being loved from pure motives, unconnected with worldly considera-

tions, and made the arbiters of our affections and thoughts. It is said that the Lord will come as a thief ; yet it is not the Lord who takes away the knowledges of truth and other externals of the religious character. The inwardly cherished evil of the heart is the thief that robs us of our treasures, when they are laid up on earth, in the earthly mind and for earthly purposes. This is said to be the effect of the Lord's Coming, because exploration and judgment in the other life are effected by a stronger sphere than usual of the Divine presence, which brings blessing to the righteous, but a curse to the wicked, since it brings to light the inward evils of their heart, which are stirred to madness by the Divine influence, so opposite to their own nature.

4. There are others who have not lapsed into such errors, or who, having done so, have been reclaimed, and who become of the number of those who overcome in the temptations to which they are exposed. Of these the Lord says, *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.* The general meaning of this is obvious. Garments relate to the outward life and profession ; especially to the truths from the Word in which one is principled, or the notions he regards as true, which he has formed for himself or adopted from others. The garments are defiled when there is anything cherished within which is inconsistent with what is displayed without. As the church of Sardis represents those who make a profession of religion, and are strict in their attention to formal worship and morality, but care little about vital religion ; so those among them who do not defile their garments are those who practise these observances from spiritual motives, who learn truth from the Word and live according to it. It may seem as if the difference between the two classes included in the description of the church of Sardis was rather an outward than an inward one, that it consisted rather in a difference of practice than of principle. This to some extent is true. The more spiritual a man is, the more correct will be his morals, the more devout will be his worship. In some things the man who acts from principle will be less strict than the man who acts by rule. Your men of law are great sticklers for outward observances and outward proprieties. But all this may be combined with bigotry, uncharitable-ness, and self-seeking. The man of principle is less regardful of the conventionalities of religion, but more scrupulous about its essentials. He does not concern himself so much as to what men think as to what God regards. He endeavours to have “a conscience void of

offence towards God and towards men," but his conscience is regulated, not by human opinion, but by Divine truth. This truth is the garment which he wears, which he tries to keep unspotted from the world and the flesh. Evil acts indeed defile the garments; but the absence of evil acts does not always preserve it clean. The garment may be defiled by inward impurities as well as by outward pollution. And even the garment of righteousness may be deeply stained by the idea of merit, which adheres to every act that is done solely with a view to reward, either temporal or eternal. Of those who have not defiled their garments the Lord says, "They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." To walk with God is a phrase in frequent use among the professors of religion, and it means, to live constantly under the Divine influence and guidance. To walk is a term often used in Scripture, and its general meaning is, to live. To walk with God must be to live as He desires, and to submit to Him the regulation of the affections and thoughts, so as not to will anything but what He wills, nor to indulge any thoughts but such as are in accordance with the truths of His Word. And to walk in white is ever to preserve the truth we have received pure and unsullied, which can only be done when all within corresponds to the profession without, and no sinister ends or views are suffered to mix themselves with those which the truths we profess require. This is a state which can only be fully experienced in an advanced state of the regenerate life, wherefore it is spoken of as a reward which shall be enjoyed in consequence of persevering in keeping the garments undefiled, not as a state identical with it. Such is the Divine Mercy, that so long as a regard for heavenly objects occupies the supreme place in a man's mind, the garments are not considered as being defiled, notwithstanding the imperfections which exist in him by the inheritance of a corrupted nature, and which has often manifested themselves in a manner which, if his ruling affection is really placed above them, fills him with shame and alarm. Considered absolutely, his garments are indeed defiled by these imperfections, although the defilements are not imputed to him, provided he does not favour or justify them. But his garments are not considered as possessing that pure whiteness promised to those who keep themselves undefiled, until even those imperfections are so far subdued as no longer to rise in rebellion against the life of love and purity in the heart. Nor are we perhaps to expect that we shall ever walk with God in white-robed innocence, until we have exchanged the garment of mortality for that of an immortal existence. For although death effects no essential change in the state

of the soul, it removes the grosser covering in which it lived in this lower world, and raises the seat of consciousness into a region of mind unobserved and untrammelled by the natural senses. Instead of the rainbow of promise and the many-coloured garments of chequered human life, in heaven we shall have the white light of realized truth, and the white robe which is the righteousness of saints, as they stand before the throne of Him who is Light itself and Righteousness itself. It is by walking before the Lord in integrity of heart, as Abraham was commanded to do, and by following Him whithersoever He went, as the disciples were required to do, that we are accounted worthy to walk with God in white. Worthiness to walk with God is from God. We can claim no merit for what the Lord enables us to do or to be. The reward is not of work, but of grace. We cannot obtain the prize without running the race. We cannot become worthy of walking and living with God without keeping His commandments. But all that we must do to entitle us to the reward we do by the grace and power of Him who bestows it. When, therefore, it is said of the faithful that they are worthy, the meaning is, that they enjoy conjunction with the Lord, from whom all worth and dignity proceed.

5. 6. The Lord proceeds to say of them, *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.* Although every church is required to overcome, the evil to be conquered is different with each. All have to fight against the corruptions of their fallen nature, but every one has something, both hereditary and acquired, peculiar to himself. That which those symbolized by the church of Sardis have especially to oppose in themselves is the tendency to sit down satisfied with the profession and outward observances of religion, instead of possessing its substance and inward life. The white raiment which they obtain as the result of overcoming we have already considered. Two other distinguished blessings are promised. Not to blot his name out of the Book of Life, but to be numbered with the living, evidently implies the blessing of eternal life. The Book of Life is the Holy Word, and also the interiors of the human mind which are formed, or reformed, according to its holy principles. Not to blot out a person's name out of this book is to acknowledge that the quality of his mind is in agreement with its truth, and thus to make him a partaker of eternal life. Not to blot out his name implies that his name is already there. We read afterwards of some who were not written in the Book of Life. These are described as among the ranks of the Lord's enemies. Those who

belong to the seven churches are to be regarded as being numbered among His friends, some of them indeed very faulty, and others luke-warm, but still attached to His cause, and desirous to be reckoned as His disciples. The least of them are nominally the members of the household of faith. But to save their names from being blotted out of the Book of Life, they must become real members of His Church, or enter into the principles and life of that New Church to which they are called,—become the subjects of that new kingdom which the Lord was to come to establish upon earth. The Lord also promises to confess the name of him who overcomes before His Father and His holy angels. When the Lord speaks of His Father, He does not mean another person separate from Himself. His Father is His own Divine Nature as distinguished from His Human Nature; therefore also His Love as distinguished from His Wisdom. To confess the name of any one before His Father is to bring that soul into conformity with and into possession of His Love. The Lord, by His Wisdom, leads us to His Love, or, what is the same, by faith leads us to charity. He confesses our name before His Father when love to Him is our ruling affection. He confesses us also before the Father's angels. When the Lord speaks of the angels, He means not only the inhabitants of heaven, but that which makes them so, and that is the sphere of Divine Truth, including in it Divine Love, which proceeds from the Lord, and constitutes the life of all angelic beings. For angels are not angels by virtue of anything they possess of their own, but solely by virtue of what they receive from the Lord. To confess the name of any one before the angels is to recognize in him a quality of wisdom and faith derived from the reception of the Lord's truth, which the angels represent. This promise of the Lord's to the church of Sardis is two promises in one; for the Lord when on earth delivered them separately. To those who confessed the Lord before men, Jesus in one instance (Matt. x. 33), promised that He would confess them before His Father; in the other (Luke xii. 8), that He would confess them before the angels of God. It would appear, therefore, that some are confessed before the Father only, some before the angels only, and some before both. If Divine language is exact and full of meaning, this distinction must be significant and edifying. And what does it teach us? That those who have confessed the Lord from love will be established eternally in love; that those who have confessed the Lord from truth will be established eternally in truth; and that those who have confessed Him from both will be established eternally in both. It is not to be understood that in heaven there is any love without truth,

or any truth without love, but only that in some angels one is more predominant than the other, while in others they are more equal and more perfectly united. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the angels of God; here, of His Father's angels. The angels of God are the truths of wisdom: the angels of the Father are the truths of love. Happy are those who have so completely conquered their own self-love and self-wisdom, and so perfectly confessed in their lives the love and wisdom of the Lord, as, so perfected in both, to be confessed by the Lord before His Father, and before His Father's angels.

We have already considered five of the seven churches which represent so many different classes of those who form the universal Church of Christ at the time of its end, and from amongst whom a New Church is to be established. Of the several states of mind which the seven churches symbolically describe, the best and the worst seem to be represented by the two remaining churches; of these two, the church of Philadelphia is the first to be considered.

The slightest perusal of the Divine address to this church is sufficient to convince us that it represents a class of persons of a comparatively exalted character. It is remarkable that while all the other churches are either themselves charged with deficiencies, and called to repentance, or cautioned against seductions to which they are liable to yield, the church of Philadelphia is addressed in the language of unmixed approbation. The similarities between this and the best of the other churches are attended with differences which tell to its advantage. To the Philadelphians it is said, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet;" which evidently points out a state connected with; yet superior to, that of the Smyrnians, to whom the Lord says, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." To the church of Smyrna the Lord promises, as a reward of fidelity, to give them a crown of life, intimating that it is yet to be won; but to the church of Philadelphia, he says, "Hold that thou hast, that no man take thy crown," intimating that it is already obtained. To the church of Smyrna he says, "They must be tried, and have tribulation ten days; but of the church of Philadelphia he says, "That He will keep them from the hour of temptation," or trial, "which shall come upon all the world," upon all the rest of the church, "to try them that dwell upon the earth." So with respect to the church of Pergamos, it is said, "Thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith;" which resembles the declaration to Philadelphia, "Thou hast kept My

Word, and hast not denied My Name." But to keep the Lord's Word is to practise the truth, while not to deny His faith is to believe it. The superiority thus appears manifest on the side of Philadelphia on all points in which any similarity is observable between them.

The church of Philadelphia seems in a great measure to partake of the excellences of the other churches without their defects. Not that this church is perfect; but it is nearer to perfection. It represents those who are in genuine truth founded in genuine goodness, and whose mind is open, so as to be in communication with, and in an advanced state of preparation for, the mansions of heaven. This will appear very clearly from the language in which the church is addressed.

7. And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia write. The name of the city whose Christian inhabitants are now, in the literal sense, addressed, is so much in harmony with the character of the persons belonging to the professing church who are included in the spiritual sense, that if we did not know that a city so called really existed in Asia, we might suppose the name to have been invented by the writer of the sacred book to express the spiritual quality of the class of persons described. Philadelphia signifies brotherly love. It was on account of its beautiful meaning that the benevolent Penn, when he founded the capital of the State of Pennsylvania in America, borrowed this name for his rising city; and thus a Philadelphia has arisen, and continues to flourish, in the Western Hemisphere long after the Philadelphia of the east, the seat of one of the seven churches of Asia, has ceased to exist, or, at least, to be known by that name.

To this church the Lord addresses Himself as *He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.* All these expressions mean certain Divine perfections which exist in the Lord, and of which He is the bountiful dispenser to those who, like the Philadelphians, are disposed and prepared to receive them. When the Lord says He is holy and true, He intimates that He is addressing those who in an eminent degree receive from Him the sanctifying principles of His truth and love, and in their measure become like Him, holy and true. The Holy and True is He also that hath the key of David, and that opens and shuts by His own independent and irresistible power. What is this key of David that locks and unlocks the universal and everlasting gates? To David himself no such power belonged; from him no such power could be derived. It must be of David as a representative of some

principle in His Divine Nature that the Lord speaks. Christians in every age have acknowledged that David was a type of Jesus Christ as a king. But in what does the regal office of the Lord consist? In what does His priestly office consist? The Lord is a king as Divine Truth; He is a priest as Divine Love. Divine Truth is the governing power in the universe. It is the origin of all that we call law. Divine Love is the ministering power of the universe. It is the origin of all that we call influence. David, representing Divine Truth, was therefore an eminent type of the Redeemer; for the Lord came into the world as Divine Truth. He was the WORD made flesh. It is always with reference to His assumption of humanity that the Lord is prophetically called David. And the appropriateness of this is evident when it is known, that the Lord came to redeem mankind from the captivity of a powerful enemy, that enemy being the Devil and Satan, or the whole powers of darkness. The Lord therefore came as a Deliverer, a Man of war; "For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak" (Isa. lix. 17). When through death He had destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. ii. 14), he then had the keys of hell and of death (Rev. i. 18), as well as the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xvi. 19); therefore He "openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." This power of opening and shutting is not only said to be beyond the power of men, but beyond all power whatever. The original does not speak of man. The power He exercises is supreme and absolute. His power, in a spiritual view, is that of opening heaven and shutting hell. This is the power of salvation. In reference to those who are saved, this power consists in opening heaven and shutting hell in the minds of the faithful themselves. Man was created a heaven and an earth in miniature. By creation his spiritual mind is a little heaven and his natural mind is a little earth; that is, they are respectively the seat of heavenly and earthly affections. But what was once an earth, and even an earthly paradise, sin has turned into a hell. In every unregenerate man this hell is open. It is the evil heart, out of which proceed all the vices that have made the world itself a pandemonium. When the hell of the mind is open the heaven of the mind is shut. The Lord came into the world to reverse this order. By the work of general redemption He reversed it in regard to the abodes of angels and demons; by regeneration He reverses it in regard to man himself.

The work of individual redemption opens the heaven of the inner man and shuts the hell of the outer man. This is the work of the Lord alone. It can only be effected by Him who, by His incarnation and His great works of redemption and glorification, received all power in heaven and on earth. He received it, not as God from God, but as man from God. He received all power from His Divinity into His Humanity. He opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens. We must indeed work with Him ; yet His is the power by which we work ; and the power being His, we have this confidence, that, if we trust in Him, “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. viii. 38).

8. Alluding to His power of opening and shutting heaven and hell by virtue of His possessing the key of David, the Lord proceeds to say, *Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.* In the general sense the Lord, by His work of redemption, has set an open door before all men; for all may now freely enter into His kingdom, both on earth and in heaven. In an eminent sense the Lord Himself is the Door. “I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved” (John x. 9). Jesus is the Medium or Mediator. Through Jesus alone there is admission into the church and heaven, because He, as Man, has opened the barred gates, and ascended up into heaven, and far above all heavens, and has thus opened the way into the holiest of all, and has become the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. ix.). But there is a special sense in which the Lord has set an open door before those meant by the church now under consideration. Why does He open for the church of Philadelphia a door which is closed as yet to all the other churches? Because this church represents those in whom the door of the inner man is opened to the reception of heavenly things, and, as a consequence, heaven itself is open to the admission of their souls, when they quit their earthly tabernacles. The Philadelphians are already in that state of united faith and charity, to which all the other churches are only in the capacity or in the progress of attaining. Their conversation is in heaven (Phil. iii. 20). They are heavenly-minded; and that substantially is heaven. They have not, however, actually entered through the door into the inner chamber of the mind where heaven has its dwelling-place. Although the spiritual mind is opened, the regenerate man does not enter sensibly into it, till he puts off his material body, and becomes an angel. In the meantime, heavenly

light and love descend thence into his rational mind, giving him a clear perception of Divine truths, and a vivid delight in heavenly things. Those who are in this heavenly state, and continue in it to the end of life, will enter through the door into full and conscious possession, both of the heaven that is without them and the heaven that is within them. The means by which the door is opened the Lord states in the words that follow, "For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name." There are two sources of saving strength—love and charity. All strength comes indeed from the Lord. But that strength in us is according to the strength of our love to Him and our neighbour. Love is the motive power with every one. Truth is the directing and regulative power. The Philadelphians had only a little power, because, as we have seen, they represented those who are in brotherly love, which is the secondary love of religion and of heaven, love to the Lord being the first. Yet a little strength is sufficient to overcome a great amount of evil; for the promise is, "One man of you shall chase a thousand" (Josh. xxiii. 10). With the strength to resist evil the Lord imparts the power to do good; and therefore the Church which has a little strength is also said to have kept the Lord's Word, which evidently means application of the Commandments of the Lord's Word to life. There is no other way of keeping His Word. A knowledge of the truths of the Word may be deposited in the memory; but unless they are exalted into the affections, and thence govern the practice, they cannot truly be kept, nor will they be permanent. The Lord when on earth kept the whole of His Word, which is meant by its being said in reference to certain acts and events that the Scripture was fulfilled; and is acknowledged by all Christians when they speak of His having fulfilled the law. By keeping and fulfilling from its inmost ground the whole of the Divine Word, He became Himself, even as to His Human Nature, the living form of the Word. And if ever a man becomes a spiritual, or rather an angelic being, it must be by a similar process, by keeping the Lord's Word, till he becomes, in his finite measure and capacity, a living form of Divine truth. One of the most important, indeed the most important of the truths of the Word, is that which teaches that the Lord's Humanity is Divine; and therefore the acknowledgment of this is mentioned as one of the causes of heaven being opened to the persons here addressed, when it is said of them that they have not denied the Lord's Name. As in Scripture name is expressive of quality, the Lord's Name means the quality or nature by which He can be known to His creatures, and worshipped

by them. God is known only in Christ. The Divinity of the Lord can only be known and worshipped in His Humanity. The Humanity is the Name of the Lord. "Father, glorify Thy NAME." "There is none other NAME under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved." Here we have an evidence showing how important it is not to be confirmed in the denial of this sacred truth, this first of all introductory knowledges by which heaven is opened in and to the human mind. The doctrinal confession of this truth cannot, however, of itself open the door of heaven. The Lord's Name is His character; and those only confess His Name who, knowing His character, strive to bring their own into conformity with it. The Lord does not however say that the Church here addressed has confessed His Name, but only that it has not denied it. Not to be in the negation of a great truth, is to be potentially, though not yet actually, in its affirmation; and this state is described and represented by the church of Philadelphia. Charity and faith are united in the mind, but not yet wholly in the life. The open door is set before them; but they have not yet actually entered through it into the full realization of the heavenly state. A complete harmony and union are not yet established between the spiritual mind and the natural; but the door of communication between them has been opened, and the submission of the lower to the higher is one of the results.

9. This result is described in its being said, *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I loved thee.* Among the various blessings that the Holy Word holds out as encouragements to the Christian to enter on and pursue his heavenward course, there is none which he will more highly prize, when once he has sincerely set about the work, than the assurance so often repeated that all his foes shall be put beneath his feet. This is indeed a promise which, as to its literal sense, the merely natural man would gladly see fulfilled. But tell him that his natural enemies are not designed in the promise, but that the enemies to be subdued are the foes of his own household, his own mind, and he will perhaps not think the promise worth a fulfilment, for he regards these foes not as enemies but as friends. The sincere Christian, however, knows the value of a conquest over his spiritual foes. He knows that there are many propensities to evil within him which must be removed before he can attain the object on which he has set his supreme affections. And when his supreme affections are thus set on eternal things, the evil affections which from time to

time manifest themselves become hateful to him, and there is nothing he so much desires as to be liberated from their influence. If this is our state, experience will convince us that nothing but a Divine power can really deliver us from these affections. We shall learn that this Divine power cannot be successfully exerted in our favour unless we strenuously resist them, and earnestly pray to Him for assistance. We shall rejoice in the assurance of the Holy Word, that if we do this we shall be delivered from them ; that new affections and delights will by degrees be inseminated in their place, and that whatever is in opposition to these will finally be subdued and made both subject and subservient to the ruling love. For everything in the natural mind which is not evil in itself, but which only becomes so by being raised out of its proper place, and allowed to have dominion where it should be content to serve, is reduced and made an instrument of use, whilst everything positively evil is removed and cast out. This is meant by those who say they are Jews and are not being made to come and worship at the feet of those whom they had before persecuted and endeavoured to destroy ; which is beautifully expressive of the inversion of state which takes place when heavenly love or charity is exalted to the supremacy, and every natural affection is reduced to subserviency. In regard to the meaning of the Jews, we have, in speaking of the similar language in the Lord's address to the church of Smyrna, shown that as the descendants of Judah, Jews represent the principle of love to the Lord. A pretended Jew, the opposite of the true one, represents the love of self. Self-love is not in itself an evil love. It is only evil when it rules, and makes every higher affection subordinate to itself, and subservient to its own ends. The affections of this love are the most deeply seated and the most delusive of all the affections of the human heart ; for what is nearer and dearer to the natural man than himself ? And when self-love rules, how subtle its reasonings, how fertile its resources ! It is truly the synagogue of Satan. Yet when the spiritual mind is really opened by an acknowledgment of Divine truths and a life according to them, even this affection of the mind, which before was a delusive enemy, becomes a useful servant. The false Jews, when they submit themselves, are seen to be good affections of the natural man, though nothing more, and in that capacity they do homage to the spiritual man and become his useful instruments. Instead of pretending as before to be the real constituent principles of the Church, and thus deserving to rank as the head, they humbly come to worship at the feet. The feet are symbols of the natural mind ; and when the

natural loves acknowledge that this is their place, even they become receptive of that life which flows through the internal from the Lord, which reduces all things to their proper order, and keeps them in their proper place, and imparts also to them all their proper satisfaction and delight ; “I will make them to know that I have loved thee.”

10. Another point of similarity, which helps to bring out more clearly the character of those represented by the church of Philadelphia, occurs here. It is said to the church of Smyrna, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried.” To the church of Philadelphia it is said, *Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* Patience is a word of much the same meaning as suffering ; but what with the church of Smyrna is yet to come, is with the church of Philadelphia already past. The Lord’s Word is here called the Word of His patience, in allusion to the combat against evil desires and false persuasions, which those who attain a heavenly state must previously maintain ; and to the sense of privation experienced between the laying down the life of the old man, and taking up the life of the new. Before regeneration can be completed, the spiritual mind and the natural mind are to be united ; and before this can be effected, a state of suffering, more or less severe, is unavoidable, and this exactly in the degree in which any false or evil principles have been confirmed by reasonings in their favour, and by actual life. When, however, resistance to such principles has been faithfully persevered in, and when the Christian has conquered in temptation, he is preserved from the danger of being injured by such conflicts for ever after. He has the Divine promise, “I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” In a general sense, this decisive hour is the time of the general judgment described at the end of the Book of Revelation. Although this takes place in the spiritual world, its effects are experienced in the natural world. Only those in either world are kept from its temptation who keep the Word of the Lord’s patience. In a more particular sense the hour of temptation means those states of trial which every one is subjected to after death, as a final preparation for his admission into heaven ; and the Coming of the Lord, which is a day of rejoicing to some, and of mourning to others, is, individually, the period when we are ushered by death into His more immediate presence.

11. The certainty of the events which the Lord here speaks of is expressed by the words, *Behold, I come quickly.* The spiritual sense of the Word has no relation to time. Spiritual events in this world happen in periods of time; but their causes are in the spiritual world and in the spiritual states of men, and these states are meant in the Word by times. The Lord's Second Coming is that to which a general reference is made; and this, measured by time, can hardly be understood as having come quickly. When His Coming is understood of that event which introduces us into the eternal world, the meaning of the word quickly is impressive as well as appropriate, since, whether soon or late, it is certain. And knowing the certainty of the event, how needful the admonition, "*Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" The crown which is obtained by labour can only be preserved by watchfulness and perseverance. The Christian obtains his crown, not by gaining a victory over another, but by conquering himself. Before the crown is the cross. By subduing the evils of his corrupt nature, he gains an incorruptible crown; not the crown of earthly glory, but that of spiritual intelligence and wisdom. The church of Smyrna is promised a crown on condition of being faithful unto death; but this church has obtained the crown during life. We should say during natural life; for those who are here represented have already passed through the death which is yet future to those whom the church of Smyrna represents. They have to hold fast what that church has not acquired, a true faith grounded in true charity. This must be held by a good life. Especially needful is it to hold fast the graces of religion in trying times, as these are understood to be; when men are too much disposed to win the faithful from their allegiance and duty to God. For these are the times of which the Lord said, "*Take heed, that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many* (Matt. xxiv. 4.).

12. The promise given to those who hold to the principles of spiritual life which they have been so happy as to acquire, is one of the most interesting but singular of all those that occur in the seven churches of Asia; *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name.* It is remarkable that those who have already obtained the crown have yet to overcome, and to receive the reward of victory. The two states of this church are those which

belong, the first to the church militant, and the second to the church triumphant ; one to the Christian life on earth, and the other to Christian experience in heaven. Between the description of these two states these words intervene, "Behold, I come quickly." The Coming of the Lord ends the earthly and begins the heavenly state. It is to this state therefore that the present promise more especially relates. We do not say exclusively, for these two states are also experienced in this life ; the first being, in this application, a state of reformation, and the second of the regenerate state itself. In each case there is a judgment. When by death one appears in the more immediate presence of the Lord, a judgment is finally passed upon him and on everything pertaining to him ; and if he can bear the trial, all the remaining impurities of his nature are removed, and he is eternally exalted to the angelic kingdom. The promise which is given as the reward of overcoming, describes the state, after this ordeal, of those whose governing affection is mutual love, when they have passed through the door which had been set open before them, and it is closed behind them, shutting out the world and all its imperfections and tribulations, and preserving them for ever in a state of blissful security. The first thing that must strike every one as peculiar in the enumeration of the blessings is the Lord's speaking, and repeatedly speaking, of God as His God. To understand this it is necessary to know what is the prime meaning attached to this Divine name when it occurs in the Holy Word. Some, no doubt, infer that when Jesus speaks of His God, His words have the same meaning as when uttered by a mere man. Such a notion is founded on a misconception. If Jesus Christ is really a subordinate being, it is very extraordinary that in the numerous scenes in which He is exhibited in this Book of the Revelation, He is never represented as offering worship to another, although the worship of every other order of dependent beings, from the four symbolic beasts around the throne to the great multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, is repeatedly mentioned. Nay, further, although a distinct representation seems to have been made to John of the Divine Being as sitting on the throne of heaven, and of a Lamb in the midst of the throne, no discourse whatever is mentioned as taking place between them, far less any adoration paid by one to the other ; while worship is alike offered to both by the angelic host, who cry, " Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." It would be very strange, if Jesus were

an inferior being, that no trace should appear after His glorification of His acknowledging His inferiority ; and still more so that, instead of His worshipping the Father, the same Divine honours should be paid to Him as to the Father. These are facts which clearly demonstrate the truth of the doctrine which affirms the Father and the Son, or God and the Lamb, to be, not two separate persons, but two essentials of the same Divine Person, which are His Essential Divinity and His Divine Humanity. But how is this reconcilable with the Lord's saying, My God ? In the same manner, that it is reconcilable with His so often saying, My Father. When He speaks of His Father, though some may suppose that He alludes to a person distinct from Himself, no one concludes that this must necessarily be an object for Him to worship. No more is this necessarily included in the idea when He says, My God. By both expressions He means to speak of His own Divine Essence, only with this distinction, that when He speaks of His Father He means His own Divine Essence with regard to His Divine Good or Love, and when He speaks of His God He still means His own Divine Essence, but with respect to His Divine Truth or Wisdom. That He does not mean by the phrase, My God, a Divine Person superior to Himself is also evident from His saying of him that overcomes, " I will write upon him the name of My God." It is clear that none but God Himself can communicate His name, whatever this may imply, to any human creature. And if Jesus were a subordinate being, it would be the height of presumption for Him to say that He would do this. When, therefore, Jesus declares that He will write on him the name of His God, He in the same words declares that He is that God Himself, since otherwise He would have no power to dispose of God's name. Innumerable instances occur in the Old Testament in which the names Lord (Jehovah) and God are used in reference to that Divine Being, who sometimes is called Lord, sometimes God, sometimes Lord God. No one who believes the Holy Word to be really Divine can imagine that these names are used indiscriminately, but must conclude that every name by which the Divine Majesty has been pleased to make Himself known, must be descriptive of some distinct essential or attribute of His Divine Nature. As the names Lord and God are those far most frequently assigned to Him, no doubt they must refer to the two most universal essential attributes of the Divine Nature, and these are, the Divine Love or Goodness and the Divine Wisdom or Truth. The same distinction is preserved in the New Testament, where also we frequently find the words Lord and God used separately, and sometimes also used together, as in the next chapter, where the four

beasts say, "Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty." Whenever then the word Lord is used, it is because the subject treated of relates to the Divine Goodness, and its operation in the salvation of mankind; and whenever the term God is used, it is because the subject treated of more particularly relates to the Divine Truth, and its operations in the same Divine work; and when both are mentioned, it is because the subject treated of has as much connection with the one Divine principle as the other. The reason of the term God being used in this benediction is, that those who are the subjects of it receive more of the Divine truth than of the Divine good, being principled more in truth of a superior order grounded in good than in the highest good itself; and the reason of that name being so often repeated is, that those are treated of who receive of this essential Divine attribute in a very eminent and ample measure. And the Lord emphatically says, My God, to intimate that the essential attribute, Divine Truth, belongs to Him alone, dwells in Him alone, and proceeds from Him alone for the salvation of mankind. We come now to speak of the blessing itself.

The first thing said of him that overcomes is, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God." The temple, wherever mentioned in Scripture, refers literally to the temple at Jerusalem; and this was considered under the Jewish Dispensation as the immediate dwelling-place of the Lord, who was supposed to be present between the two cherubim placed over the ark in the Holy of Holies. On this account the temple, in the highest sense, was a type of the Lord's Divine Humanity, this being the dwelling of His Essential Divinity, as is evident from His saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again," on which occasion it is expressly declared "He spake of the temple of His body." In an inferior sense, the temple means sometimes the church on earth, and sometimes heaven, these being the dwelling-places of the Lord in His Humanity. In that particular sense it means the regenerate mind, which is the Church and heaven in the least form. In the present instance, it evidently means heaven, for it is said that those who are admitted shall go no more out, alluding to the shutting, after their admission, of the door which God sets open before them. But it is said that those who are spoken of shall be made "pillars" in this temple, which again alludes to their characteristic feature as being principled in truth derived from goodness; for as pillars are the support of a building, so is truth from good the support of heaven and the Church. Good in its own nature, and therefore alone, is flexible and yielding. It is truth that gives it firmness and stability. All the stability of the heavenly

graces which tend to compose the church and heaven in the human mind, depends on their having truth from good for their support. Good inclinations and intentions alone, without genuine truth to protect and direct them, are easily led astray and perverted. On the other hand, a knowledge of truth alone, without good inclinations and intentions, is easily shaken and destroyed, and may even be applied to the confirmation of error.

But a right apprehension of truth, grounded in a love for goodness, secures the mind alike from wavering and perplexity, and prevents the fair edifice of Christian principle and profession from sinking into a disordered heap of useless ruins. It is therefore with peculiar elegance said of those here addressed, by whom such characters are meant, that they shall be pillars in the temple of God. The name of God and of the holy city, and the Lord's new name, are to be written upon them. A name, we have seen, is expressive of nature or quality. When the Lord says, He will write upon His people the name of His God, it denotes that all the life of love, perceptions, and thoughts in those spoken of, shall always be regulated by the unerring dictates of Divine truth—that they shall derive the essence of their nature and quality from it, and be in consequence always in agreement with it. This, however, applies more particularly to their inward states. That their outward states will be of the same nature, and thus their words and works will be marked by the same character, is meant by its being added, "And the name of the city of My God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God." The holy city, New Jerusalem, is, as we shall see when we come to the 21st chapter, the Church of the Lord's Second Advent, the perfect complement of all other churches that have hitherto existed in the world. The New Jerusalem is represented as a city and a bride—a city as a form of truth, a bride as a form of love. It is the name of the city that is to be written upon those represented by the church of Philadelphia. The name of God is to be written within, the name of the city without. Truth proceeding immediately from the Lord will be inscribed on the heart, and truth proceeding from Him immediately through heaven, will be inscribed on the understanding. The imagery teaches a still more interior truth. Heaven is an image of the spiritual mind, and the earth of the natural. The holy city comes down from heaven when the truth that sanctifies the affections comes down to direct the thoughts, and thence to guide the life. The Lord adds finally, that He will write upon them His new name. What is the Lord's new name? What is it that is characteristic of Him that can be said to be new?

The new name of God is Jesus Christ. That which characterizes Him since His incarnation is the Humanity which He assumed and glorified, in which He now dwells, and in which He is worshipped by the whole Church in heaven, and in which He will be worshipped by the New Church on earth. Those who have His new name written upon them, are those who in heart acknowledge the Lord in His Humanity as the sole object of their faith and love, and who are renewed in the spirit of their minds by the new influence proceeding from the Saviour in the temple of His glorified body. Their vile body has been formed after the image of His glorious body. How great the blessings thus promised to those loving and faithful ones, who belong to the church of Philadelphia ! To be not only admitted into heaven, but to be transformed entirely into the angelic nature ; to have the name of our God, of the New Jerusalem, and the Lord's new name written upon us ! To have our nature so conformed to His, that nothing of an opposing kind may be ever felt by us any more ! Let us eagerly do all that we are required to do, and which Divine aid is ever at hand to enable us to do, to attain this state. If we cultivate from the heart the spirit of mutual love, of which all these blessings are only the developments, we too shall come to be pillars in the temple of our God, and have these glorious names written upon us.

We now come to the last of the churches to whom this Book of the Revelation of John is inscribed, or the last of the classes of the professing members of the Christian Church, who are in any degree capable of acknowledging the Lord at the time of His Second Advent, and of entering the New Church to be then established by Him. As the Laodiceans are the last that are mentioned, they represent those who are least in a state for duly receiving the Divine mercies of the Second Advent. They are addressed more in the language of unmixed reproof than any of the other churches. Those most severely censured of the others are the members of the church of Sardis, who are said to have a name to live, but are dead ; still there were a few names in Sardis who had not defiled their garments. But no exception is made in favour of any of those of Laodicea ; the threat of being entirely cast out by the Lord is held forth to all.

14. Before considering the state of this church, it is necessary to notice the characters which the Lord assumes in addressing it. *Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write ; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.* Amen is an Old Testament term, and means *the truth.* It is the word used in Isaiah, where we read, "He who

blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of Truth ; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of Truth" (lxv. 16). The word here translated "truth" is in the original "amen." If it were left untranslated, the passage would read, "He that blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God, the Amen ; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God, the Amen." It has therefore been remarked by several learned critics, that when Jesus Christ declares Himself to be the Amen, He declares Himself to be the Divine Being spoken of in Isaiah, and who is here represented as the only Being who will be thought of in the happy times here announced, and who must therefore be the only God of heaven and of the church. But the Lord assumes the title Amen in many other instances besides this in the Revelation. The word "verily," which so often occurs in the Gospels, is in the original, "amen." It was transferred into the Greek from the Hebrew Scriptures on account of the great depth of meaning which it contains, as expressing not merely truth, but the Truth itself, truth in its very essence. Hence, again, critics affirm that when the Lord Jesus Christ says "Amen, I say unto you," it is the same thing as if He said, and may indeed in strict conformity with the original be expressed in another language, "I, who am the Amen, say unto you." And further, that when He declares Himself to be the Amen, He declares Himself to be the Divine Truth itself, or Isaiah's "God of Truth." Accordingly, it has been remarked also that none but the Lord Himself either ever assumes this sacred title, or confirms the certainty of His declarations by it. All the prophets and apostles regarded this as too holy a form of speech to be imitated by them, and as appropriate to the Supreme Being alone. Thus, when Paul wishes to express great earnestness on a subject very near his heart, he does not say to the Roman Christians, "Amen, I say unto you," but, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not," where the word translated truth is not in the original "amen," but is a common Greek word of that meaning. Yet the apostle does on another occasion use the word "amen," but only in reference to Him respecting whom alone it can with propriety be used. Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, he says to the Corinthian converts, "All the promises of God are yea and amen," on which the same judicious critics (Gulpicius and Lud. de Dieu) observe, "That doubtless the promises of God are amen (or the truth itself) in God Himself, and in Him only, wherefore to say that they are amen in Jesus Christ is equivalent to saying that He is the same as God Himself."

It may appear to be inconsistent with the dignity we claim for Jesus as the Amen, that the very next character He takes to Himself is that of a witness, which seems to indicate something distinct from, if not inferior to, that which is witnessed. Nevertheless, the witness and that which is witnessed are one and the same Divine Being, though they have reference to distinct principles or qualities of His infinite perfections. As the Amen the Lord is Divine Truth in its essence and origin, as the faithful and true Witness He is Divine Truth in its going forth or proceeding; and Divine Truth in its going forth or proceeding bears witness to Divine Truth in its origin and essence. Divine Truth, such as it is in itself, is beyond the comprehension of any finite being. Of this none but the Lord Himself can know anything. To become at all perceptible to man it must be accommodated to his faculties. When thus accommodated it is a faithful and true witness which makes manifest its original.

Divine Truth, as it is in itself, may be compared to light in its origin in the sun, where it exists, not as a principle perceptible to our senses as light, but rather as a power of giving light, but which, if it could be approached by anything proper to the world below, would instantly consume it. Divine Truth as a faithful witness, or in its attempered manifestation, is like the light proceeding from the sun to the earth through the medium of the atmospheres, which is perceived by our senses as light, and, containing heat within it, vivifies and gladdens the whole face of creation.

Yet every one perceives that the light, though proceeding from the sun, is one with the sun, while it is essentially distinct from the material bodies that are enlivened by its beams.

The Lord came into the world as the Light, but clothed with humanity to accommodate it to the minds of men. He assumed human nature in the world for the express purpose of imparting such a quality to His Divine influences as might adapt them to affect the mind of man even in his natural state. When the Lord was examined before Pilate He said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." By these words our Lord informs us that He assumed the human nature to make His Divine Truth apprehensible to man in that natural state signified by the world. For the Divine Truth, as it previously proceeded from the sun of heaven, was only adapted to affect the superior regions of the human mind, but produced no perceptive impression on the natural mind in which man was then wholly immersed, so that he must have perished eternally, had not the Lord

in mercy assumed and glorified the natural principle in Himself, in order that by a powerful influx thence the Divine influences might reach and act upon the corresponding principle in man. Thus, as to the Divine Humanity and the Divine Truth thence proceeding, the Lord is the faithful and true Witness, whose testimony man can receive, and so be brought acquainted with the things belonging to his peace. The Lord further describes Himself as the beginning of the creation of God. We must take care that we do not confound the idea properly meant by the "beginning of the creation," as if it implied the first thing or being created. This is done by the Arians, who infer from this that the Lord Jesus Christ is only the First and Highest of created beings. But the original term does not mean, as the English one sometimes does, the thing begun, but that from which a beginning is made. Thus, "The beginning of the creation of God" is the same as that which gave birth to creation—the origin of creation. This is the Divine Truth proceeding from the Lord. Thus the phrase, "The beginning of the creation of God" is another proof that He is here treated of as Divine Truth, or the Word. Hence John's Gospel begins by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and by it were all things made that were made." Hence, too, we read in the Psalms, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth," where the Word of the Lord and the breath of His mouth mean the Divine Truth proceeding from Him. And the term creation here is to be taken in a spiritual as well as in a natural sense. So that we learn from the phrase that the Lord, as Divine Truth, is not only the Author of the creation of the world, but also of the new creation or regeneration of man. He is the Author of creation as the eternal Word; He is the Author of regeneration as the Word made flesh.

15, 16. After addressing to the Laodiceans the usual solemn warning, *I know thy works*, He continues, *that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.* So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, *I will spue thee out of My mouth.* This lukewarmness is not a state of indifference. The absence of concern for the soul, or interest in eternal things, is a simple and positive state. It is cold indifference, and by no means an uncommon or peculiar condition of mind, ultimating in a singular and fearful result. The state here described is the mixture and conjunction of good and evil. It is that state described by the parable of the man who, "when the evil spirit had gone out of him, not finding rest, said, I will return to my house from whence I came out: so taking with him seven other

spirits more wicked than himself, they entered in and dwelt there;" and of whom it is said that "the last state of that man was worse than the first." It is the state which the Lord alluded to when He said to the impotent man He had healed, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." It is the sin against the Holy Spirit, which cannot be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come. It is that to which the apostle adverts when he says, "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation," and to which he alludes when he says, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame." All these passages refer to the guilt of profanation in its deepest and most confirmed degree. But that those addressed as the Laodiceans have not proceeded thus far, is plain from the call of repentance being made to them, and from the Lord's counselling them to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, that they may be rich, and raiment, that they may be clothed, and eye-salve, that they may see; and from his promising a heavenly blessing if they overcome. It may indeed be doubted whether in this life any evil is ever so confirmed as to be absolutely beyond repentance. But the very fact that there is a sin which tends to sear the conscience, and destroy its sense of feeling, is sufficient to warn us against apostasy from the truth of religion and from the love of God. It is evident that to relapse from faith and righteousness into unbelief and sin, must produce a state much more destructive of spiritual life than simple indifference and evil.

But the specific charge against the Laodiceans is, that they are neither cold nor hot. To be cold is to be unaffected, from any inward ground, by love to the Lord and love to the neighbour, and to be without any affection for heavenly graces, whether relating to goodness or truth, to life or knowledge. To be hot is to be affected by these loves and graces. It is easy to see what these states are. It is not so easy clearly to see what that state is which is neither one nor the other, but is a mixture of both. When two such opposite and irreconcilable things as good and evil, truth and falsehood, are mixed together, their union must create a state in which the mind is torn by these ever-conflicting elements. God has mercifully provided for the separation of the good and the evil in the other life. And His Providence is ever directed

to the separation of good and evil in the minds of men in this life. We all see how desirable it is that good should be unmixed with evil; but we do not see it to be equally desirable, or desirable at all, that evil should be unmixed with good. It is certainly not to be wished that in this world wickedness should stalk forth in its nakedness. We do not mean that it should. We mean that good and evil, though together in the same mind, should not be so mixed and so united that they cannot be separated. This is the state that is neither cold nor hot.

To those who are in this lamentable state, the Lord says, in the tenderness of Divine Love, "I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." The Lord desires the happiness of all His creatures. When this cannot be, He desires that those who refuse happiness should endure the least possible misery. The greater the sin the greater misery. As profanation is the greatest sin, it brings the greatest misery. As it is a singular result, the result of it is expressed by a singular image. The Lord says to those who are lukewarm, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." We do not apologize for this language. It is plain, but it is expressive. We may be sure it would not be mentioned in the Lord's Divine Word were it not for some very important and significant reason. The different images that are used also particularly agree with each other. Lukewarm water provokes vomiting. Food, when eaten, is taken into the stomach to undergo the process of digestion. After this the nutritive portion is separated from the rest, and becomes a part of the body. This process corresponds exactly to that which is performed with all who depart out of this world. The good and the bad who enter the eternal world are, as it were, the food by which the heavenly and infernal kingdoms are fed and enlarged. The good, answering to those parts of our natural food which is capable of supporting our bodily frame, after undergoing purifications and rectifications similar to what the good part of the chyle receives in the ducts through which it passes before it is poured into the blood, are finally conveyed to their destination in heaven, and form a part of what the apostle calls the mystical body; whilst the bad, answering to that part of the chyle which is incapable of being converted into nourishment for the body, are separated from the nutritive part, and conveyed to the kingdom of darkness. The good have what remained of the evil which pertained to them taken away, and so are capable of dwelling in heaven; and the wicked have what they had assumed of goodness taken away, and so

are made capable of dwelling in the kingdom of darkness. But with such as are represented by the Laodiceans this cannot be done. Evil and good, falsehood and truth, are so blinded in their minds that they cannot be divided. Evil cannot be taken away from them, so as to make them fit for heaven ; nor can good be taken away from them, so as to make them fit for hell. They are as salt which has lost its savour, which is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out (Luke xiv. 34). It may perhaps appear that to be cast out of both hell and heaven were a less grievous lot than to be cast into hell. It is far more grievous. The greatest sufferings of the damned are from the influence of heaven, as the diseased eye is pained most by the entrance of light. The good and truth pertaining to them, which they had profaned by heterogeneous mixture, makes them continually receptive of an influx from heaven ; and this immediately flowing into the evils and falsities they have also confirmed, occasions continually such torment as cannot attend any other state whatever. But we leave this to be conceived, as the very thought of it by men disturbs the angels in their spheres. The dreaded guilt of it is also one of the saddest forms of religious mania that infest the spurious conscience of susceptible and superstitious minds. Instead of dwelling longer on the nature and consequences of the sin, we will proceed to consider some of the other characteristics of those who fall into it.

17, 18. The church of Laodicea is addressed in this language : *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked : I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* This passage affords ample demonstration of the style in which the Word is written. It everywhere consists of natural images designed to convey spiritual ideas. Natural riches are the symbols of spiritual riches, which are the knowledges of Divine things. These are the true riches of the mind, by a right use of which all heavenly blessings may be procured, as all worldly comforts may be purchased by natural riches. These riches, like money, are not true wealth, but only the means for obtaining it. One may therefore be spiritually rich and yet be poor, as the miser with his money bags may yet be the poorest of the poor. The Laodicean, however, claims not only riches, but increase in goods. This is expressed by one word, which literally means "enriched."



This seeming tautology is only one of many instances of the kind in the Word, intended to express the duality which exists in all things; and in this instance is expressive of the knowledge of goodness and the knowledge of truth. The apostle well expresses the state of those who are here described, when he says, "Knowledge puffeth up." Knowledge itself has no tendency to self-exaltation. But whatever enriches the understanding without improving the heart, has a tendency to make men vain. The passage is no doubt intended to show how vain are our pretensions to spiritual wealth by virtue of the truths of the Word we know, however abundant our knowledge, whilst we at the same time cherish affections incompatible with them. Though they may be true riches in themselves, they are not so to us, unless we are in the life which accords with them, or at least in the steadfast purpose of making every effort, and submitting to every sacrifice, requisite for its attainment. That such riches are not true riches to such persons as are here treated of, is plain from the next part of their boast, which is such as could never enter the thoughts of one who was disposed to be faithful in the application of his spiritual riches. He is not saying, in the pride of his possessions, "I am rich," but also, "I have need of nothing," or, more correctly, "I have need of no one." Whether the spiritual riches that may be possessed are genuine truths or not, this arrogation of them to self, and this expression of self-confidence and rejection of dependence on a higher power, decidedly prove that they do not enrich such a possessor. In the true spirit of the king of Egypt, by whom all such perverters of Divine knowledge are represented, he says, "My river is my own, and I have made it for myself;" words which strongly express the propensity that lurks in all self-derived intelligence to arrogate to itself and its own sagacity the knowledge of Divine things which it learns from the Word, and which, when studied, cannot fail to be perverted. It is plain that those who are in this state must be all that the Divine Speaker declares them to be when He says to them, "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The term "wretched" evidently is intended as a contradiction to the arrogant saying, "I have need of nothing." To be wretched implies to be forlorn, destitute, thus to be in want of everything. Being miserable seems designed as a contrast to being enriched; and being poor as a contrast to being rich. As to be rich and enriched signify to abound in the knowledge of Divine things, both in respect to goodness and truth, so to be poor and miserable is clearly to be without anything of either. But it is added further, that

such persons are blind and naked, to denote that they are not only without the knowledge of goodness and truth, but also without understanding to discern them, which is the state of being spiritually blind, and without inclination to apply them to the removal of our evil state by nature, so that we remain in the shame of our original nakedness.

The danger, or even the bare possibility, of falling into such a state as Divine wisdom has here described, should lead us faithfully to examine our own hearts and minds, to see in what manner we have received, and for what end we cherish, a knowledge of Divine Truth. We should be careful how we suffer any sentiment of pride on account of it to gain admission into our hearts, not presuming to elevate ourselves in our own conceit above the weakest of our brethren. Humility is the only safe attitude of the soul; and a continual watch over our hearts, joined to that prayer which unceasingly looks to the Lord, is the only security against apostasy.

Supposing we may have fallen into anything of the sin of profaning what is sacred, there is a perpetual operation of the Lord's influences, supplying power and inclination to engage in the work of reformation; and this is beautifully expressed by the words with which His exhortation commences, "I counsel thee." The Lord indeed counsels us to do what is here prescribed in every page of His Word, in which the nature and consequences of sin, and the necessity of escaping from it by accepting the Divine aids offered for that purpose, are perpetually insisted on. But this is not all that is implied by the Lord's counsel. In a spiritual idea, to counsel not only includes the offering of advice, but the communication of power to obey that advice, and not only the power but the inclination—an inward prompting to attend to the advice offered. Were it not for this continual presence of Divine power and influence, salvation would be impossible, as we would be without anything to counteract the perverse tendency of our own nature, thus would not be in that state of equilibrium in which the essence of freewill consists. As the first agency in the work of our salvation is from the Lord alone, and this agency is universal, the second step in the process depends on ourselves; and without taking it the Lord's operation cannot be effectual. This is evident from that which we are counselled to do. I counsel thee "to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." To buy and to anoint evidently intimate operations to be done by us, not of

ourselves, indeed, but by virtue of aids from the Lord, which, we have seen, are never withheld. The Divine agency, which is never absent, is shown to be active here. For although we are counselled to procure for ourselves what is necessary to remedy our defects, it is equally clear that we can nowhere obtain it but from the Lord alone. He says, "Buy of Me." Although the Lord does not impart saving graces to us, unless we apply for them by exerting the faculties with which we are endowed, yet no exertion of our faculties would avail us anything, if the Lord were not at hand to supply us with what we require. And when we reflect that He who exhorts us to buy of Him is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Fountain of every saving mercy, we may know that whatever our state requires He is able and willing to supply. But if the Lord requires us to buy of Him the saving graces we stand in need of, are we to conclude that He sells them, or receives anything in exchange? No. Though bought by us, they are freely given by Him. There *is* a seller, it is true, but the buyer is also that seller. This mystery is explained by the parable of the treasure hid in a field, of which it is said that the man who had found it went and sold all that he had, and bought that field; from which it is plain that though heavenly gifts are freely afforded by the Lord, yet we are required to part with something before we can be qualified to receive them. And what can this be but the evil qualities in ourselves, which are at variance with the heavenly gifts of which we desire to be partakers? And to buy these gifts we must sell all that we have. In the present case the treasures we are counselled to buy of the Lord, are gold tried in the fire and white raiment. In these there is evident allusion to the deficiencies we labour under without being conscious of it, since we say we are rich and have need of nothing, and know not that we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Gold, we have had occasion to show, being the noblest of all metals, is mentioned in Scripture to denote the exalted affections of love to the Lord and charity to the neighbour—in short, all celestial and spiritual good, as the noblest of heavenly graces. But it is not gold simply that is recommended, but gold tried in the fire, or purified from all dross or heterogeneous matter; by which we are cautioned against letting any unworthy motives connect themselves with our spiritual duties—the duties of love to the Lord and to the neighbour; against mixing anything that springs from self with the affections that aspire after heavenly objects. Fire, in its highest reference, is an emblem of pure Divine Love, of love as it exists in the Lord Himself; therefore gold tried in the fire is

good, so pure as to bear the presence of the infinite purity of the Lord.

Trial, too, when applied to spiritual subjects denotes temptation. The necessity here alluded to of purifying gold, is expressive of the mode in which that which gold represents is purified, which is by temptation. It is common to speak of a fiery trial in allusion to anything that puts one's constancy and fidelity to the severest proof ; and those temptations are called trials by fire in which the whole life's love is assaulted. But the reason why the obtaining of this pure gold is mentioned as necessary, is stated to be, that we may be rich ; by which we learn that without a principle of genuine goodness there can be no real possession of spiritual riches, which are the knowledges of genuine truth. The knowledges of truth may indeed be entertained in the memory, whilst the life to which they are designed to lead is yet a stranger to the heart ; but so long as they have not a more interior abode than this, they are merely lent or borrowed treasures, which will assuredly one day be resumed, leaving us as poor and destitute as if we had never known anything of them, unless we acquire a real interest in them by applying them to their proper use. There is no way of acquiring a real property in the truths we may happen to know, but by procuring from the Lord a life of genuine goodness, by cultivating a real spiritual love to Him and charity to our neighbour, and manifesting them in a blameless and useful life. The next thing described as necessary to be obtained is white raiment, that we may be clothed, and that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. It is said of Adam and his wife that they were naked and were not ashamed, which very expressively describes the state of innocence that thinketh no evil, which is experienced when in every affection and thought man has regard to the Lord, and never looks to self ; thus what was experienced by those who lived before man had acquired a selfish nature replete with every evil. Accordingly there is no mention in Scripture of nakedness unaccompanied with shame in relation to any but man in his integrity. Whenever nakedness is afterwards spoken of, it is always connected with the idea of shame and disgrace. Whenever, therefore, as in the present instance, it is thus mentioned, it represents a state in which man is wholly immersed in the evils of his selfish nature. He is considered as standing in his mere natural selfhood, which is nothing but evil, an object of disgust to all who are elevated above it. He is here directed to procure of the Lord white raiment, that he may be clothed ; to clothe

meaning to remove the evils of the selfish nature, so that, being no longer indulged, they become as if they did not exist, the affections being elevated quite out of and above them. White raiment is often mentioned in Scripture to denote truths in the mind, which are genuine, because they are grounded in good. Garments in general are mentioned in Scripture to denote such sentiments respecting truth and doctrine, whether well or ill grounded, as a man naturally entertains, because they are agreeable to his reigning affections, thus such as spontaneously flow forth from his life. The Lord is said to cover Himself with light as with a garment (Ps. civ. 2). Light is an appropriate emblem of pure Divine Truth. When therefore this is said to be the garment of the Lord, we see that garments in general must denote the sentiments regarded as true by those who hold them. And white, as being the colour approaching nearest to the nature of light, is in like manner an appropriate emblem of the purest truth that can be received by a finite being. Garments and riches, here connected, differ in this respect. Riches are truths first acquired by an external way, and deposited as knowledge in the memory ; garments are the spontaneous dictate of the mind, being the form which the affections assume when they enter the thought. How high and heavenly a state is it to be spiritually clothed in white raiment—to have genuine truth as the character of every thought on spiritual subjects that ever enters the mind ! How plain is it to see that this can only be experienced when genuine goodness reigns in the heart, since out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ! Another direction given to the Laodiceans is, to anoint the eyes with eye-salve, that they may see. This is not put in the same form as the others. The eye-salve is not, like the gold and raiment, directed to be bought of the Lord, but is considered as being already in possession, and the instruction given is only about its application. The reason appears to be that the eye-salve denotes good in conjunction with truth, both which principles under another form have already been procured. The eye is an emblem of the understanding ; and to anoint the eyes with eye-salve that they may see, is to return to a state of real intelligence, by submitting to the instructions of Divine truth received in sincere affection.

19. To His counsel the Divine Speaker adds this important declaration, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* The Divine chastening is the rebuke of Divine Love. How consolatory an assurance ! This is one of those Scripture truths that shine out clearly in all its heavenly brightness. But do any halt over “as many as I love,”

as if the Lord loved some, but not all? Here is the solution. The Lord loves all; but only those who have received the Lord's love are the subjects of His corrective rebuke and chastening; they only can experience the opposition between the pure truth of heaven and the false persuasions that occupy the natural understanding, and between real heavenly good and the corrupt inclinations that engage the natural will; especially in those who have fallen into any degree of profanation. To be admitted into such trials is an infallible mark of the Lord's love for us, and the ground of some hopes of the presence of His love in us. And what is our duty under such trials? *Be zealous therefore, and repent.* Zeal is the warmth of the mind; and when the Lord exhorts us to be zealous, He expresses the necessity for our fixing the whole heart on heavenly ends and objects. To repent, repentance meaning a change of mind, is here used to express that change of understanding so necessary for all who would have any real interest in heavenly subjects; as to be zealous implies a renewal of the heart. How beautiful, when some idea is obtained of its true meaning, is the whole of this admonition and exhortation of our gracious Lord and Saviour!

20. If the admonition and exhortation contained in the preceding verse be beautiful, still more, if possible, is the declaration which follows them, *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.* Specially applicable to the state of those who are here treated of, this Divine declaration is of universal interest. There is not perhaps a passage throughout the whole Word of God which declares, in more plain and express terms, the decided truth of heaven relative to a subject of the deepest importance to mankind, nor one to which the attention of the sincere Christian can more profitably be at times directed. The ardour of the Divine Love for man's salvation, and the free agency which enables man to comply with the Divine solicitude on his behalf, are set before him in the clearest light. As if to draw the attention of men to the subject of this address, Jesus says unto them, "Behold!" Behold, is a call to direct the eyes to some object of importance. The eyes of the mind are the understanding. To introduce any declaration with this exciting call, is to urge the understanding to be particularly attentive to what follows. The object to which our intellectual attention is drawn in this instance is sufficiently important, being no other than the Saviour of men standing at the door of man's heart and knocking to obtain admission. Every one can see the general

meaning and force of this Divine imagery. But it contains particular ideas that well deserve being brought clearly before the mind.

That the door at which the Lord stands and knocks is the entrance to the mind, is sufficiently clear from the plain tenor of the passage. Doors, on account of their forming the entrance into buildings, are apt emblems of that which introduces anything into the mind. They derive their signification from their use, and as their use is to afford admittance or introduction to a house or chamber, therefore in that language formed of natural images in which the Holy Word is written, they denote introduction or admission. The door has however a more specific meaning. The human mind is so constituted as to be capable of communicating with heaven and with the world—with heaven through the internal man, with the world through the external. Between these is the rational man or reason. This is the seat of his consciousness while he lives in the world, and may thus be called the man himself. This communicates with the internal man, and receives through it influences and perceptions flowing from heaven and the Lord ; and below, it communicates with the external man, and receives through it influences from the world, from his own selfish nature, and even from hell. And the points of its communication in both directions are called in symbolic language by the name of doors. The communication by which influences enter from the external man, or from below and without, is meant by the door of which the Lord speaks when He says, “But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly;” where the closet denotes the interior recesses of the rational mind , and to shut the door is to exclude the influences that rise from the external man and from the world. But the door at which the Lord stands and knocks must denote the communication in the opposite direction, or the entrance from the internal man or mind into the rational faculty. As it is only by communication from the Lord, as residing in the internal, that man can receive any heavenly graces, so as to accept and make them his own, this door the Lord, in His infinite mercy, condescends to entreat him to open, and knocks at it for the purpose. For although the Lord, with all the treasures of His love and wisdom, has an abode with every one in his internal man, yet none of these treasures become in any respect a man’s own, until he freely accepts and appropriates them, confirms them by his reason, and applies himself to regenerate his external man, which by nature is the seat of all evils, and brings it into confor-

mity with the internal. At this door of the heart and mind the Lord unceasingly knocks ; and every heavenward suggestion or reflection that any man seems to make to himself, or that arises in his mind, comes from this source, whatever outward cause may seem to produce it. But besides these general influences which come under the description of what is meant by the Lord's knocking, in order to man's opening the door in the full sense which is here intended, he stands in need of particular instruction. Therefore the Lord not only knocks, but he utters His voice ; and only those who hear His voice open the door. The Lord's voice is the instruction of His Divine Truth, which is the same thing as His Word. As the human voice expresses both thought and feeling, the Divine voice is expressive of Divine Truth full of Divine Love. And what is meant by hearing the Divine voice ? This is one of the phrases in which the language of correspondence between spiritual and natural things still remains in use, and is still understood. To hear is to understand and to obey. It is by understanding and obeying the teachings of Divine Truth that the door is opened, and that the Lord enters into the mind, bringing with Him heavenly gifts and graces. In reference to the man who thus opens the door, the Lord says, "I will come in, and will sup with him, and he with Me." This is a most endearing manner of stating the heavenly enjoyments of which the willing and obedient are made partakers ; speaking of feasting with his Lord, in language that almost seems to put him on a footing of equality. It is thus expressed to show the reciprocal nature of the conjunction which is effected between God and man, and the necessity that it should be thus reciprocal, that it may have a real and permanent existence. But why does the Lord express this conjunction or communion under the figure of supping together ? For the same reason that He exhibits the communication of His fullest blessings to the faithful under the type of a holy supper. To eat, throughout the Word, represents the reception and appropriation of good, and to drink the reception and appropriation of truth. But how can this be said of the Lord ? The Lord is represented in the Word as eating and drinking in the same manner that he is represented as hungering and thirsting. Hunger expresses the desire for good, and thirst the desire for truth. When applied to the Lord they are expressive of the ardent desire of His infinite love that His goodness and truth may be received by man. So when He is said to sup, or to eat and drink with man, it expresses the satisfaction of this His benevolent desire, the communication on His part to man,

as a free gift, of the treasures of His love and wisdom. And by man's eating and drinking with the Lord in return, is meant the free reception and appropriation, on man's part, of the saving mercies thus flowing from the Lord. And both together imply the operation, on the part of the Lord, for man's salvation, and the co-operation on the part of man, by which he actually concurs in the Lord's beneficent desires; thus they imply the reciprocal and full conjunction of the Lord with man, and of man with the Lord.

21. And now we come to the promise made to the restored of this church. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.* As that of the Laodiceans is the most dangerous of all the states professing Christians can be in, the evils connected with it must be the most difficult to overcome. But as is the trial, so is the triumph; as the labour is, so is the reward. The promised blessing to successful conquest is greater here than any that precede. To sit with the Lord in His throne must be the highest elevation and the greatest felicity which a finite being can attain. But mark the parallel in the conditions which lead to them. Those who sit with Him in His throne are such as have triumphed with Him in His temptations. This is the greatest lesson of Christianity, the greatest work of the Christian. To suffer and die with Christ that we may live and reign with Him! He overcame. What did He overcome? He overcame all evil and all the powers of evil. Having assumed our fallen and frail nature, He endured all the trials and temptations to which frail humanity is subject. By overcoming in these conflicts, He reconciled and united His Human to His Divine Nature, and thus sat down with His Father in His throne. Those who overcome, as He did, sit down with Him in His throne, as He is set down in His Father's throne. The cases are not indeed similar, but analogous. We can never be united to Jesus as He is united to the Father. But how great is the privilege, how unspeakable the blessing, of being exalted to a state and condition, the faintest image of those of the Lord in His Glorified Humanity! Heaven is His throne. His throne is where He reigns, whether in the individual heart or in the universal heaven. And those are nearest to Him in His throne whose hearts are nearest to Him in singleness, purity, and love.

CHAPTER IV.

1. HAVING seen the Lord, and received a commission to write to the churches, the Seer is favoured with a new vision. *After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven.* In the other world outward sight is according to inward perception. John saw an open door in heaven, because a door had been opened in the heaven of his own mind. A door is opened to us in heaven when a heavenly state is opened within us; and we see into heaven when we perceive heavenly things. But John not only saw into heaven, but he heard voices proceeding from it: *And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me.* This voice, first in importance as in order, was not merely a sounding but a speaking voice. Its trumpet tone was expressive of its nature and its power. It was the voice of Divine Truth and Divine Goodness, addressed to the affections as well as to the thoughts of the Seer, to prepare him for the celestial scene he was now to behold. The voice said, *Come up hither.* He was to ascend into that heaven the door of which he had seen opened to him. Yet ascent in the spiritual world is not through space; it is an elevation of state, of which space there is an appearance. John was called upon to elevate his thoughts and affections, and thus rise into a higher or more interior state of perception, that he might be prepared to receive the revelation which the voice promised him, *And I will show thee things which must be hereafter.* Things then future were to pass before him in a series of representative forms.

2. With the call to ascend came the change of state which it demanded, *And immediately I was in the Spirit.* This, we have seen, is a state in which not only the faculties of the spiritual mind but the senses of the spiritual body are opened, which makes the objects of the spiritual world visible. A sublime sight was now before him. *And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.* He whom he had seen in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, he now saw seated on a throne. The candlesticks were representative of the Church; the throne is the symbol of judgment. Heaven is indeed God's throne, as the earth is His footstool. But here the throne is set in heaven, and it is set for judgment. So in the Psalms, "Thou satest in the throne judging right" (ix. 4). It is important to connect this throne with that which appears in the twentieth chapter, where the judgment itself is described. The throne which John now saw represented

judgment in its commencement ; that which he afterwards beheld represented judgment in its completion. From this point judgment may be seen in its progress through the whole of the subsequent relation, till its actual accomplishment by Him who sat on the great white throne. The process of judgment may be traced in the opening of the seven seals of the book, and in the sealing of the twelve tribes ; in the blowing of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of the seven vials ; in the expulsion from heaven of the great red dragon, and the overthrow of the great city Babylon. These represent the laying open of the states of those in the spiritual world who had belonged to the Church, and on whom the judgment was to be effected. For judgment is not a single instantaneous act. Or, considered as an act, it is the last of a series of operations, by which the inmost thoughts and intents of the heart have been gradually laid open, and the outward character has been made one with the inward state. This is effected by searching, sifting, and separating. And these are representatively described by the disclosures, overturnings, and desolations produced by the agency of the celestial messengers, sent out from Him who sits upon the throne. When evil is entirely separated from good, and good from evil, in the minds of those who pass through this ordeal, the final judgment takes place ; for then it is made manifest who are the goats and who are the sheep ; then the evil are separated from the just, and all of them, both the good and the evil, go to their own place. The origin and beginning of this process of judgment is therefore represented by the throne set in heaven.

3. John now describes the Divine Judge who sat upon the throne : *And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone : and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.* This description of the great Judge is so like that given by Moses and the prophets, that we cannot fail to see that they apply to the same Being. The figures vary indeed. One difference between them is remarkable. Moses (Exod. xxiv. 10) and Ezekiel (i. 26) speak of a sapphire stone as forming the throne or being under the feet of the Judge ; while John speaks of the Judge Himself as being like a jasper and a sardine stone. This difference answers to one which existed before and since the Incarnation. Before the Incarnation heaven was the Lord's Humanity. His Divine Truth, when it descended into heaven, clothed itself with an angelic or human form in the minds of angels. Originally it did so also in the minds of men. But sin had marred that form, man's conceptions of the Divine Being having become false and perverted. To supply what no longer existed, and could not otherwise be restored, in the minds

of men, the Lord assumed humanity by birth in the world. When by glorification He had perfected that humanity, and raised it into union with His Divinity, His saving influences could descend to men, not only mediately through heaven, but immediately from Himself. His humanity, formerly representative, is now personal; formerly angelic is now Divine; formerly in heaven, is now far above all heavens, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto except in and through the Divine Humanity. Thus the gems that had been seen in His throne and under His feet, now shine with sevenfold splendour from His own glorious body. He Himself is now to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone. Of the exact nature of the precious stones of Scripture we are not always certain; but the jasper and the sardine are stones whose known characters afford a key to their symbolic meaning. White predominates in the first; the other is a glowing red; and white is the emblem of truth, and red is the emblem of goodness. In these two stones we have emblems of the two essential attributes of the Divine Being, goodness and truth, or, what is the same, justice and judgment, the sardine stone being the emblem of goodness, and the jasper of truth. These are the eternal principles from which the Divine judgments proceed.

While the Judge was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, "There was a rainbow round about the throne, like unto an emerald." A rainbow round the throne presents an appearance of the light of Divine Truth, proceeding from the Lord as the sun of heaven, as it is reflected, or refracted, in the minds of the angels, forming objectively a circle of glory around Him from whom the light proceeds. But the subject here treated of is judgment, and to this the rainbow has reference. The colour of the rainbow, unlike that which we see on earth, is not without a cause and a meaning. In the other world, where all appearances are the out-births and images of ideas and states of mind, colours express the qualities of affection and thought in those who receive and reflect the light of truth. In the highest heaven, where the truth is received and manifested in love, the prevailing colour is red; in the second heaven, where the truth is received and manifested in charity, it is blue; and in the lowest heaven, where the truth is received in faith and manifested in obedience, it is green. Something of this may be seen in the succession of colours in our world. The golden luminaries, the azure sky, and green-robed earth, present some analogy. Our rainbows combine all these colours,

red, blue, green. The emerald rainbow around the throne is expressive of the state of those who were to be judged, as well as the promise of what was to come after the judgment. Those on whom the judgment was to pass, were yet in their natural or external state, and therefore still in the intermediate world, which is nearest to, and most resembles the world of nature. The *quasi* heaven, composed of these, and from which the dragon and his angels were cast down, was that which gave its green colour to the rainbow. In the tenth chapter we read of a mighty angel clothed with a cloud, and having a rainbow upon his head, but no peculiarity of colour in the rainbow is mentioned there.

4. *And round about the throne, whose heaven was spanned by the rainbow, were four and twenty seats (literally thrones): and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.* These thrones are also emblematical of judgment. Referring the imagery of the Revelation to the Israelitish church, the elders who sit on these thrones have been supposed to allude to the twenty-four courses into which the priests who attended on the Temple service were divided. This division is mentioned in 1 Chronicles (xxiv. 29), as an order which Aaron instituted by command of God. Zacharias was executing the priest's office before God in the order of his course, when the angel appeared to him to give him the promise of a son. As the subject of the present vision is the setting up of the throne for judgment, it is more consistent to understand these elders, seated upon thrones around the throne of the great Judge, as having reference to the elders of Israel, whose function it was to judge, or to the apostles, who were to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The number of these elders is different both from that of the elders of Israel and the apostle, though their function is the same. It is the function in fact which is represented. Judgment on the spiritual states and eternal destinies of men can be performed by One only. He who is Omniscient, and knows the hearts of all, is alone able to judge all. These elders, like the apostles, represent all the principles of goodness and truth, or of justice and judgment, derived from the Word, on which heaven and the church are founded, and which are therefore the principles according to which those who have belonged to the church are judged. The number twenty-four has the same spiritual meaning as twelve. Doubling a number does not change the meaning, but exalts it. The number twelve is the symbol of completeness, being expressive of all the principles of goodness and truth in heaven and the church. These,

in the highest degree of perfection, are meant by the twenty-four elders, because they were around the throne of the great Judge, preparing for the accomplishment of the Last Judgment.

5. The thrones being set, signs appear of the coming Judgment. *And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.* The thunderings and lightnings of the Lord are represented in Scripture as producing the two effects of judgment, overwhelming the evil and delivering the good. The Psalmist, praising the Lord for his deliverance from his enemies, says, "The Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice ; He shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. He delivered me from the strong enemy ; He brought me forth also into a large place." He then declares the important truth that the same Divine cause produces opposite effects on the righteous and the wicked, "With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful ; with the upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright ; with the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure ; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward" (xviii. 13-26). In Psalm lxxvii. David says, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Thou hast with Thine arm redeemed Thy people. The voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven : the lightnings lightened the world : the earth trembled and shook" (13-18). Both effects are sometimes mentioned together. "The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice. Clouds and darkness are round about Him : justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images" (Ps. xcvi. 1-7). In these and all other instances thunder and lightning are symbols of the Divine Love and Wisdom which proceed from the Lord through heaven and the Word. According to the distinctive meaning of the ear and the eye, as corresponding to the two principal faculties of the mind, thunder, which is heard, means truth as it affects the will, and lightning, which is seen, means truth as perceived by the understanding.

In relation to the present subject, these sights and sounds are signs of judgment. The state of the Church which renders judgment necessary is analogous to that which produces the thunderstorm. An atmosphere overcharged with electricity restores its equilibrium by an electric discharge which we hear as thunder and see as lightning. A spiritual atmosphere overcharged with evil and error has its equilibrium restored by judgment, which is described in Scripture as

the lightning and thunder of the Almighty. When the thunderstorm has cleared the air, we breathe with a pleasurable sense of freedom and freshness, and feel that health and life are in the breeze. Something of this kind is expressed in the present case. After the thunder and lightning there were voices. Judgment is followed by the voices of mercy and truth communicating comfort and instruction; as the law was given to Moses after the thunders of Sinai, or as the still small voice fell upon the ear of Elijah, when the wind had rent the mountains and the rocks, and the earthquake and the fire had spent their force.

There is another sign here of love and light after judgment, *And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.* In the first chapter we read of there being seven Spirits before the throne, and of the Son of man walking in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and of holding seven stars in His right hand. In this chapter all these images are combined. In the first chapter the seven Spirits mean the Holy Spirit, the seven stars mean the church in heaven, and the seven candlesticks the church on earth. The seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits, mean both the Holy Spirit and the church in heaven and on earth. And these seven Spirits, like lamps of fire, are mentioned after the thunder, to teach us that judgment is effected to prepare for the formation, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, of a New Church in heaven and on earth when the old has passed away. The New Church is here represented in its origin, and in its first principles and beginning. As the seven lamps before the throne were lamps of fire, we have in this image the union of love and light, both as existing in the Holy Spirit, which was to be produced by its operation, and as characterizing the church. The Spirit assumes, or rather is represented by, different forms, according to the nature of the subject. It descended on Jesus in the form of a dove, to represent purity and innocence, the result of purification; it descended under the appearance of cloven tongues as of fire on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, to show forth their commission to preach the truths of the Gospel under the influence of love to all nations; and here it is represented as lamps of fire, to signify the union of truth and love in which the church originates, and of which it consists.

6. Besides the lamps of fire, *Before the throne there was a sea of glass.* Much is said in Scripture of the sea. In this prophetic book (xv. 1) there is a sea of glass mingled with fire, and a sea which gives up its dead (xx. 13), and when the new earth is created there is no more sea (xxi. 1). What is meant in these and other instances by the sea?

At the time the Scriptures were written, the earth was understood to be a circular plain, surrounded by water; and the sea was considered to form its boundary; those, therefore, who dwelt on its shores and islands were regarded as being on the outside and afar off. When under one view the earth and sea mean the church, the earth is the internal of the church, and the sea is its external. The inhabitants of the earth are the internal members of the church, and those who dwell on the sea are its external members, or those who live according to the spirit, and those who live according to the letter. The sea of glass, therefore, was a representative image of the external of the church, or of those in the church who are in external worship. But this sea is to be understood as relating to the church above; for the throne, before which the sea lay stretched out, was set in heaven. This sea was among the things which should be hereafter. It was an image of that heaven, or that church triumphant, which should be formed by the Lord after the judgment at His Second Coming; but it is an image of that heaven or glorified church in its ultimate degree. But although John saw in this sea an image of the outer circle of that church, yet even in its least glorious part it was glorious: though a sea, it was a sea of glass, *like unto crystal*. The idea of clearness and translucence is no doubt included in the meaning of this sea; but there are two particulars that may be observed respecting it. Glass is a production of art, crystal of nature. The sea was of glass, but it resembled crystal. The sea, abstractly considered, is a symbol of truth, but of general, and therefore of natural, truth. Glass and crystal have the same signification, but they express the clearness of truth. The general truth, of which minds in an external state are receptive, and by which the external man is formed, may be said to be comparatively human, because it has much of man in it; it is being accommodated to his natural thoughts and feelings. Yet in its true state, it is like the Divine, as the glassy sea was like crystal; and by admitting the light of superior truth, that of a lower order becomes luminous. It is like the letter of the Word, which is external truth, and is a glassy sea, which becomes clear when the light of the spiritual sense shines through it. Another particular in the imagery is this. The sea of glass and the crystal give the idea of light, but not of heat. The ancients supposed that crystal was congealed water, and the Greeks expressed it by the same name as ice. As the Scriptures speak of things as they were understood at the time, we may admit this into the Scriptural expression and symbolism. The inference is, that those who are represented by the

sea of glass were indeed in the truth, but not so much in love. This is one of the characteristics of the external church, and one by which it is distinguished from the internal church. Love is the highest grace of religion ; and being the last attained, comprehends in itself all others. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and is itself the law of liberty which casts out fear. All other gifts vanish, but this never faileth. The gift lower than love is truth, the lower grace is faith. These are the marks of the external church, and of the ultimate heaven. They are not indeed truth without good or faith without love. Solitary truth and faith alone have no place either in the true church or in heaven ; but there are those in both who have not attained to that high state in which love is all in all. These are the “sea of glass, like unto crystal.”

Besides the sea of glass before the throne, *In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.* These four beasts are evidently the same as the cherubim, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, and so minutely described in the first chapter of Ezekiel. Their identity will be seen when we come to particulars. Here we inquire what is meant by cherubim. These marvellous creatures are not angels. They are still higher in the scale of existence. They are even higher than the elders. They are nearer to the Deity. Not only are they round about the throne, but are in the midst of it.

What can that be which is in the midst of the throne of God, and yet emanates from it to all around ? It can be no other than the Word of God, the Word which the Lord Himself is, and which emanates from Him, as the life of all that live, whether in heaven above or on the earth beneath, and spiritually considered, whether in the church in heaven or in the church on earth. The cherubim are, therefore, called living creatures, from a Hebrew word that signifies life, the same as that from which Eve had her name as the mother of all living. This is also the meaning of the word beast, which would be better rendered animal, as giving the idea of an animated being. In a secondary sense the cherubim symbolize the Lord’s providence, which is the government of the universe, spiritual and material ; for this He exercises by His Divine Truth, which is the Word. The beasts being full of eyes before and behind teaches us that the Lord sees all things from first to last, from the beginning to the end, from eternity to eternity, and is therefore all-provident in His government both of the natural and the spiritual world, and of the temporal and eternal concerns of men. The Lord’s providence and revelation have two objects, or effect their

object, which is order and happiness, by acting in two ways, one by preventing evil, the other by effecting good. Cherubim were, for this reason, placed at the gate of Eden, to guard the way of the tree of life, and over the mercy seat to guard against violations of the sanctity of the law. And as they appeared to John in connection with the judgment, they give the promise of protection to the angels in the great crisis which was then approaching.

7. A particular description of the four beasts is now given. *The first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.* This description answers to that of the cherubim in Ezekiel; "They four had the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle." The only difference is, that in the Revelation the calf takes the place of the ox. When the cherubim are seen to symbolize the Word of God, there can be no doubt that the living creatures that form them are intended to represent the different aspects which the Word assumes according to the dispositions, capacities, and states of men, and which it also assumes to the same men in different states of the regenerate life. In Scripture a lion is the symbol of power, a calf of affection, a man of wisdom, an eagle of intelligence. The Word is adapted to all states, from the simplicity of childhood to the wisdom of advanced age. But not merely is the Word adapted to those different conditions of mind, but its truths take these different forms in the minds which receive them, and even in the same mind in successive periods of the regenerate life; and they exist together in minds which have arrived at an advanced stage of religious experience. When the cherubim are understood to mean the Lord's providence, then His care over angels and men is presented to our minds by the several animals. But the Lord's providence is not exercised only over us but in us; and indeed it is efficacious for our well-being only so far as it can act through our affections and convictions, our charity and faith. It is in our affections and thoughts that the Divine love and truth take those forms which are symbolized by the animal shapes of the cherubim. Yet these shapes are not simply those of known creatures. They are compound, made up of parts that have a symbolic meaning, as now follows.

8. *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within.* The use of wings to the feathered creation guides us to their meaning in relation to Divine and heavenly things. Wings enable birds to soar into the air, and move

from place to place, and to cherish and protect their young. Wings are attributed to the Divine Being in reference to corresponding Divine operations. "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. xviii. 10). As the Divine Being does not move from place to place, this imagery is expressive of His omnipresence; He is present with all by His providence, which is the cherub, and by His spirit, which is the wind. The cherishing and protecting power of the Divine providence is still more frequently described by the same imagery. "How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings" (Ps. xxxvi. 7). We know the "loving-kindness" which Jesus expressed when He addressed the children of disobedience, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37). In regard to the Psalmist, he not only describes the Divine protection by wings; he tells us what they signify, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His TRUTH shall be thy shield and buckler" (Ps. xci. 4). The Lord's wings then are His truth, in the covert of which the faithful trust (Ps. lxi. 4); in the shadow of which they rejoice (Ps. lxiii. 7). The wings of the cherubim are thus the Lord's Divine Truth, by which he protects and sustains, comforts and guides, His Church, both in heaven and on earth. Each of the beasts had six wings. The seraphim seen by Isaiah (vi. 1) had six wings, with twain they covered their faces, with twain they covered their feet, and with twain they did fly. The wings of the seraphs were in pairs. The trinal and the dual pervade the Word, and thence heaven and the Church, and indeed the whole creation; for by the Word all things are and were created. Goodness and truth are united in the Lord and in all that proceeds from Him. We speak indeed of the Word as being Divine Truth, and of heaven and the Church as being receptive of, and formed by, Divine truth, but we do not mean truth alone. Truth cannot exist alone. Good and truth are a pair, neither of which can effect anything without the other. Any one possessed of good or truth alone, of charity or faith alone, would be like a bird with one wing, which would be a useless appendage. The same may be said, in a far higher degree, of the Word itself. If it contained truth without good, or wisdom without love, it would be as if the cherubim and seraphim had wings on one side only of their bodies. Regarding the cherubim as representing the Word, the three pairs of wings are emblems of its three de-

grees of goodness and truth, adapted to the three orders of intelligences, of whom the Lord's kingdom consists. But the wings of the cherubic animals were full of eyes within, to instruct us that the truths of the Lord's Word are inwardly full of Divine wisdom, by which His works of providence and salvation are directed. The inmost wisdom of the Word and of providence is a hidden wisdom. So hidden from human observation are the ends and views of providence, that natural men believe that what some call providence is only chance, blind fortuitous action. They see no eyes in the outstretched and everlasting wings, and indeed believe in neither. And as for the Word containing hidden wisdom, they can see no signs of wisdom in it. But these things are hid from the wise and prudent, lest they should profane them. The worldly wise are those who have eaten of the tree of knowledge, and between whom and the tree of life the cherubim stand with the flaming sword, to guard the way, lest by eating they should profane that which is holy, and bring upon themselves an everlasting death. While the cherubim thus prevent the wilfully unbelieving from entering into the mysteries of the Divine Word and providence, they lead the humble believer to look upward to the Giver of life and salvation, and to live constantly to His glory.

They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. This unceasing adoration of the Eternal implies a power as unwearyed as that of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps. No creatures, however exalted, could maintain this condition. Only that which is in its essential nature Divine can rest neither day nor night. If we understand the cherubim to represent the Word, we can see the propriety of the description. The Word is Divine. It comes from God and returns to Him again. It brings God down to angels and men, and raises angels and men up to God. It reveals the Divine will and wisdom to finite and dependent beings, and leads them to worship and serve the Lord in return. Yet it is not they that worship and serve the Lord ; it is the Lord, by His Spirit and Word, who turns them to Himself. In this the Word rests not day and night. This language is evidently figurative ; for there is no night where the cherubim are found, in and around the throne. But there are different and alternate states in the church, both in heaven and in the world. There are states of comparative lucidity and obscurity in the experience of all finite creatures. No created being can continue for ever in one unvarying state of exalted devotion. The human mind, even in heaven, must have

alternations of state. No doubt, if we take in the whole heaven, we shall find what we do when we take in the whole earth, that the inhabitants rest not day and night. It is always day with one half of the globe. In heaven the sun never sets. Yet there is something analogous to day and night, produced by the angels' passing from states of brightness to states of obscurity, and from these into brightness again. These are the day and night in which the cherubim rest not. In all states, either of activity or repose, of light or obscurity, the Word and the Providence of the Lord are active, working out some spiritual and eternal good, comparatively as the vital principle is active in the body both in its waking and sleeping hours, expending its energy in useful work, or repairing its waste for renewed exertion. Both these states contribute to the welfare of the soul, and thus to the glory of God. Therefore the ceaseless glorification of the four beasts is, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and who is to come." Holiness is an attribute which belongs to God, and to the creature only as derived from Him. God is called the Holy One (Isa. xl. 25); Christ is called the Holy One (Isa. xlix. 7; Acts iii. 14); and the Spirit is called the Holy Spirit. Holiness is understood to mean the opposite of sin. Hence the Lord only is holy (Rev. xv. 4), because He only is pure. All the holiness of angels and men is from Him. The Lord Jesus is now the Holy One in a peculiar sense, in having overcome all temptation to sin, and glorified His humanity, and made it Holiness itself and the fountain of holiness to us. The thrice holy may be understood of the Holy Trinity in the person of the Lord. In all the essentials of His nature the Lord is holy; and whatever we possess of that threefold holiness we have received from Him, and ought to return to Him again. But triplication expresses also perfection, so that thrice holy means most holy. This was represented also by the Holy of holies, or the most holy place, in the tabernacle, where the Divine presence dwelt, and into whose archetype above, Jesus, as our Great High Priest, entered once for all, when He had by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. ix. 12). To him, therefore, is due the ascription of supreme and perfect holiness. He, too, is Lord God Almighty, not only as love, wisdom, and power, which these names express, but as the conqueror of hell and of death: for these essential Divine attributes were all most fully manifested and most perfectly displayed in the great work of human redemption, and in the glorification of the Lord's Humanity. In these also He is, and was, and is to come: for these ascriptions are not made to Him simply as God, but as God-man, our Saviour and Redeemer. In him, as such,

are comprehended past, present, and future, in all that relates to man and his salvation.

9-11. *And when these four beasts give glory and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.* The elders represent the principles of eternal truth or justice, according to which judgment is effected, and also those who are in the wisdom which these principles produce, and therefore those who are nearest to the throne of God. The elders are described as worshipping in unison with the cherubim. The four beasts give glory and honour and thanks, and the elders fall down and worship. They, too, give thanks, and in the same terms, but they add to their ascription of praise the reason in which their praise is grounded. If we regard this description as applicable to the Church triumphant, and which may be understood of the Church universal, we learn this important truth, that the worship of the Church is consonant with the worship of the Word, and is derived from its teaching. As, when the four beasts give glory to God, the four and twenty elders fall down and worship Him; so do the faithful follow the teaching of the Word, and worship Him. The worship of angels and men is indeed the effect of the truth and love which they have received from the Lord through the Word; so that the Word is the power which moves all in heaven and earth to render homage to the Great Author of their being and their mercies. There is this difference between the homage of the beasts and of the elders. The beasts lift up their voices in glorification to Him who sits on the throne, but the elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and cast their crowns before the throne. With the elders there is humiliation and self-abnegation. The true worshipper acknowledges from the heart that in himself he is nothing but evil, and that all his wisdom and glory are the gift of God, and should be cast before His throne, as justly belonging to Him who bestowed them. For although the gifts of God are freely given, yet they are not like earthly gifts that can be separated from the giver. Spiritual gifts live only in connection with Him who bestows them; and therefore constant humility and a sense of dependence are necessary for the preservation of whatever has been received from on high. The elders ascribe to the Lord glory and honour and power. Where the elders ascribe power, the cherubs give thanks. In the attributes ascribed to the Lord we have again the trine that pervades the Word; for glory is predicated of Divine truth, honour of Divine good, and power of their united operation. The cherubs give tharks where the

elders ascribe power, because thanks is expressive of glorification. For there is this difference between the theme of their adoration: the cherubim praise the Lord for what He is, the Almighty, self-existent, and holy; the elders praise Him for what He has done: *For Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.* In Himself the Lord is Almighty, but in His works His power is made manifest. The elders' adoration is one in which every believer and devout worshipper must earnestly join. But its theme includes two distinct but kindred subjects, which we may consider separately.

None but those who believe nature to be God, or who believe in no God above nature, will refuse to join in the confession, "Thou hast created all things." The acknowledgment of a First Cause is universal, both within and beyond the Church, and is only denied by those who have rejected the common faith of mankind. But there is a point that is of much importance to those who acknowledge a Creator, as He has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures, which is, the Divine purpose in creation. The elders say that all things were created and continue to exist for the pleasure of Him who created them. Some understand this to mean that God created them for His own glory; and of the Divine glory men are liable to think very much as they think of human glory, or rather of that false glory which natural men value and pursue, and which is only self-glory. True glory is the lustre of good deeds; and good deeds are such as benefit others, not merely those who do them. We cannot suppose the Divine glory to be lower than true human glory, nor His works to be less purely benevolent than the deeds of good men. The Divine Being could not create and cannot preserve His works for any other end than to make His creatures happy. His own glory cannot be promoted or secured by anything but this. He can have no love of glory for His own sake; He can only be glorified in giving glory to those whom He has made. The language of the elders is sufficient to teach us this very important truth. The pleasure of God can only be the love of God. Finite beings have pleasure in what satisfies the desires of their hearts; and the hearts of the good are influenced by virtuous love—the love of what is good and pure and holy. The pleasure of the Lord can only be in the happiness of His creatures. The Psalmist says, "Let the Lord be magnified, that hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servants" (Ps. xxxv. 37). And this is indeed the subject of the words we are now considering in their spiritual meaning. Spiritual creation is the creation of a new heart and of a right spirit in the children of men. This forms the grand theme of thanksgiving in heaven and the

church. Angels and good men adore the Lord, indeed, as the Creator of all worlds, but they know that the end of creation was the eternal happiness of the creatures He made in His own image. They further know that when His creatures fell by sinning against Him, He came into the world to redeem and save them; and thus to create them anew in the image of Himself, which they had lost. And the work of redemption was a work of love, a work in which the pleasure of the Lord was manifested; therefore it is said of the Redeemer that "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. liii. 10). The works of redemption and salvation are therefore works of creation; and are those for which the faithful most earnestly adore and glorify Him. The works of redemption and salvation are eminently works of love: for His pleasure they were effected; they were the means by which men were to be made new creatures. Those who are re-created not only glorify the Lord for their spiritual creation; their spiritual creation is that which enables them to glorify Him. We never praise the Lord truly for anything that is done *for us*, except so far as it is done *in us*. The new creature only can praise Him for his new creation.

CHAPTER V.

In chapter xx. there is an account of judgment. The dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books are opened, and another book, which is the Book of Life, is opened, and the dead are judged out of the things written in the books. This event, and the means by which it is effected, now begin to unfold themselves; and to one and the chief of these means our attention is drawn in the progress of the vision, as recorded in the present chapter.

1. *And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.* The volume of the book, which is here rolled up and sealed, may be understood as a figure of the book of God's remembrance, in which the actions of all are recorded, and which are disclosed in "the day of judgment." But the book in which all are written is no other than the book of books, the Word of God, out of which all are judged. This will appear more clearly when we come to treat of the judgment. In this book all the then future states of the Church are predicted and described; and we have seen that the general judgment, treated

of in the Word, and in this Book of Revelation in particular, is connected with the end of the church, not with the end of the world. The book is written within and on the backside; for the Word consists of particular and general truths, having an internal sense, which is spiritual, and an external sense, which is natural. In reference to the church, it also describes the internal and external states of men, or the state both of the internal and external man of every one. But in reference to the judgment, the writing within and the writing without relate to the two different classes to be judged. Those who are internally holy are judged by the writing within, and those who are only outwardly holy are judged by the writing on the backside, for they have no true internal man. The book which we have to contemplate is seen in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. He that sat on the throne is distinguished from the Lamb, afterwards seen. It is sufficient at present to regard the occupant of the throne as the Lord God Almighty. In the right hand of His power, which is omnipotence, guided by omniscience, is the book sealed with seven seals. We must regard the sealed condition of the book, not as absolute, but as relative to heaven and the church. And as the state of the church at the time of its end is described in the Revelation, and that state is one of spiritual darkness and unbelief, the Word to it is a sealed book. The seven seals not only express the complete closure of the Word, but its closure of the sevenfold kind which the seven churches and the seven spirits point to. The angels act upon the church through the Word; and when the Word is closed their influence is proportionally interrupted, and the connection between heaven and the church is to the same extent cut off. If the book were to remain sealed the church would perish, and no flesh could be saved. When the time is at hand the seals must be opened, that the truth may be made known anew. How this is to be effected we now learn.

2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? If, as the result shows, no finite power was able to open the seals, why should this proclamation have been made? Several reasons might be assigned. Although finite power cannot open the seals, finite power can close them. The Word is closed, its true meaning is lost, by the sinfulness and errors of men. And when once it is sealed, Divine power only can open it. And to convince men, and make this truth evident before heaven and earth, or before the church in both worlds, the proclamation is made. This form of making that important truth

evident, is representative. The angel does not mean an individual angel, and this is even indicated in the literal sense by the word for angel having no article. Whenever an angel is mentioned in the Word, in the spiritual sense something Divine is meant, because the angelic principle which makes an angel is from the Lord, and is the Lord in him. The angelic principle from the Lord makes heaven in general, as it makes every angel in particular. The strong angel is therefore the Lord Himself speaking through heaven, or heaven speaking from the Lord. When the Lord speaks through heaven, it is not, of course, with an audible voice, but through His Word, and by His Spirit entering into the minds of angels and men. The angel's proclaiming is therefore the Divine influx into the minds of all who constitute heaven and the church, to prepare them for the manifestation of the Divine power, in doing for them what they are unable to do for themselves. The speaker is called a strong angel, because Divine Truth has all power in heaven and earth,—not Truth alone, but truth as the form of Love; and the Lord is that Truth. The proclamation of the voice is, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" We have already remarked that men by their evils close the Book of Life. The question therefore is expressed in reference to this. The idea of power is no doubt included, but moral rather than intellectual power is the quality which is here in requisition. The opening of the book is also a moral act. For the word here translated *to open*, means also to build, or rather *to rebuild*, as in Acts (xv. 16.), "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will *build again* the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." The proclaiming angel virtually says, Who has the moral power to restore that which moral weakness has lost—to *restore* the true meaning and teaching of the Word, to *rebuild* the temple of religious truth and virtue that has fallen down, and re-establish the church which has become a ruin? But one is required who can both open the book and loose the seals thereof. These two acts relate to the unfolding of the moral and intellectual principles of the Word, its principles of charity and faith. As judgment is the subject treated of, the demand has relation to this also. For as all are judged out of the book, any one who is able to open the book must also be able to judge. We now learn what response was made to the demand.

3. *And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.* The form in which the negation of power is here expressed is intended in a general sense

to include all degrees of finite existence, from the highest in heaven to the lowest upon earth. But as John was now in the spirit, and thus in the spiritual world, these three kinds of men mean especially the inhabitants of the three heavens. Yet as heaven is inhabited by men from the world, these are included in those who are unable to open the book, or even to look thereon. Nothing could give us a more impressive idea of the utter inability of finite beings, even the highest order of human intelligences, to know the wisdom of the Word, so as to read the hearts and minds of men, as the subjects of final judgment, by its truths of faith and life. Not only were they unable to open the book; they were unable to look thereon. To open the book is an act of moral power; to look thereon is an act of intellectual discernment. No one is able to see and judge the state of the human heart, nor even to perceive and judge the state of the human understanding. Nor has any one the least power of himself to know and understand the Divine truths of the Word. This also is included in the meaning of there being no man, even in heaven, able to open or to look upon the Book of God, which He now held in the right hand of His power, which is omnipotence.

4. John tells us the effect this woeful result had upon him. *And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.* John's sorrow foreshadow the sorrow of those whom John represented. John here represents those who, at the end of the church, when the Word has become a sealed book, still retain some of John's love, and lament the darkness and evil that prevail. The prophet Jeremiah expressed the deepest grief when he contemplated a similar condition of the Israelitish church, when the harvest was past, the summer was ended, and they were not saved, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. ix. 1). But we have the assurance that while "weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." The night of the church had caused John to weep; morning now dawned upon him.

5. *And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.* The one who prevailed is the Lord the Saviour. It is sufficient at present to speak of the titles by which He is announced. His omnipotence is meant by the Lion. But the Lord's power is the activity of His

love and wisdom, and these are meant by Judah and David. Judah is a type of the Lord as Divine Love, and David is a type of Him as Divine Wisdom. The Lion of Judah is the power of love, the Root of David is the Divine Wisdom in its origin. He is called the Lion of Judah and the Root of David as the Redeemer, the conqueror of hell and of death. These two titles express the important idea that the Lord is love and wisdom united ; and that, as the infinite Man, whose will is love and whose understanding is wisdom, He prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof.

6, 7. With this consolation came the effect. *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.* There can be no question that the Lamb is the Lord Jesus ; but it is important to consider the position He holds in relation to Him who sat upon the throne. From the outward representation it would seem as if the Saviour, as the Lamb, were a different being or person from Him who sat upon the throne ; for He comes and takes the book out of His hand. Yet the vision directs our attention to a circumstance that is inconsistent with this idea. The Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne on which the Almighty is seated, and in the midst of the four beasts which are in and around the throne. In the Gospels we hear of the Son sitting on the right hand of the Father, but here He is in the midst of the throne itself. All these representations are intended to express spiritual ideas, and not to present literal facts. And when we regard the Father and the Son, and God and the Lamb, as being the Divinity and the Humanity of the one God and Saviour of men, we can see the deep significance that lies concealed under these representations. The right hand of God is His power ; and the Son's sitting on the right hand of the Father means that the Lord's Humanity is “ exalted to the right hand of power,” as the Lord Himself expressed it, or to that which the right hand of power signifies ; and further, that the Lord's Divinity exercises all power by His Humanity. The same idea is presented in another form, and by another kind of imagery, in the present case. The King who sits on the throne holds a book in His right hand, and the Lamb comes out of the midst of the throne and takes the book out of His hand. Is not this designed to teach the same truth—that the Lord's Humanity is that by which the power of His Divinity is exercised ? The Divinity of the Lord is indeed the source of all the blessings which heaven and

the church enjoy, but they come to us through the Humanity. The seals are opened by the Lamb to express the great truth that the Humanity of the Lord is the power of God unto salvation, being the Lord God Himself in His new relation to angels and men. The Lord Jesus is therefore at once the Source and the Giver of all things. But He is represented here as a Lamb as it were slain. This does not merely mean that the Lamb is the Lord who had been crucified, for no marks of crucifixion can remain in His glorious body, but that in the church He had been crucified afresh. His crucifixion began when His sole Divinity was denied, which took place when He came to be regarded by the church as the Second Person of the Trinity, and when His Humanity was believed to be like that of another man. The true doctrine respecting the Lord Jesus is, that He is the very and only God of heaven and earth, at once the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; and that His Humanity is Divine. As the doctrine of the Lord is the very central truth of the Christian Church, when the truth on that doctrine came to be changed into error, the Lord was virtually slain.

But there is another interior truth included in this. The Lord is represented as a Lamb to express His innocence; for He is essential innocence, and the Author of all innocence in angels and men. When His innocence is not received by the members of the church, the Lord is slain; for innocence is the inmost principle of the church, as it is the inmost principle of heaven. Thus, then, the appearance of the Lord's Humanity as a Lamb as it had been slain, is intended to represent the rejection of the Lord as the Supreme Being and the Fountain of all life, and as being Himself life in its essence and origin. And He is so as to His very Humanity; for the Lord Himself declared, when on earth, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John v. 26). Yet the Lamb is not represented as being then dead. So far from this, He is described as having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. Horns are the emblems of power, and eyes of intelligence. And as in the Lord these are Divine, they mean, in His case, omnipotence and omniscience. The Lord in His Humanity is the omnipotent and omniscient God. And His eyes are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. "His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men." But His power and His wisdom are employed for the defence and enlightenment of His church, in its various degrees and stages of perfection—the sevenfold order in which it is in so many ways represented in this part of the vision. The Divine Spirit is sent forth into all the earth, for it flows from the Lord as truly and impartially

as light flows from the sun, but in a special way it flows into the members of the church, which is spiritually meant by the earth. The Spirit indeed flows out from the Lord to all alike ; but the church, which is in possession of the Word, has means of receiving the Spirit which those without the church have not, or have imperfectly. Who but He whose is the Spirit of truth could be worthy to take the Word of truth out of the hand of Him that sat on the throne, and open its seven seals ?

8. *And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.* Whether we regard the beasts and the elders as symbolizing the principles of the Word, or those in heaven who first and more immediately receive them, the worship which they now offer to the Lamb strikingly shows the Supreme Divinity of the Lord Jesus. And not only they, but all beings, "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," fall down before the Lord in His Divine Humanity. Could any declaration more entirely convince us of the Lord's title to the worship of all finite and dependent beings ? But apart from this dogmatic truth, there are considerations that affect more nearly those who need a Saviour, as well as those who know and acknowledge a God. The subject here presented relates to the worship of the Lord for the blessings of redemption. Worship has two great uses, to humble the worshipper, and exalt the object worshipped. Humiliation consists in a state, not in an act. We may bow down in worship, and rise up as high-minded as we were before. True humiliation before God is humble-mindedness. As we cannot love God and hate our neighbour, we cannot be humble before God and imperious to our neighbour. As outward humility in worship is nothing without a meek and humble spirit, the exaltation of the Lord in worship is nothing without the exaltation of His love and truth in our hearts and minds. Outward worship is intended to aid us in acquiring these inward graces, and only so far as it does this is it true and useful devotion. If we regard this worship of the Universal Church as that of humanity in its largest aspect, we may apply the representation to ourselves individually as images of the greatest. Then in the throne we may see the government of the Lord's love and truth in our inmost heart. In the beasts we may see the Word as it contains and unfolds the principles of the Lord's government. In the elders we may see the highest or celestial affections and perceptions of love and wisdom in

the mind. In the many angels round the throne we may see the spiritual affections of good and thoughts of truth in that region or faculty of the mind which is below the celestial. And in the creatures which are in the earth we may see the natural affections and thoughts of good and truth, or those which are lowest. Now unless all these exist in the mind of the worshipper, he is not a worshipper indeed; and unless all his affections and thoughts successively and simultaneously bow down before the Lord, and exalt Him in the heart and mind as the Supreme Love and Wisdom, he does not worship Him in spirit and in truth. It is the elders that have the harps, and the golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And unless the music and the incense of our devotions are offered by our highest and best affections, true worship is unable to live in our souls, and to ascend to the throne of the living God. We proceed to examine this imagery more minutely. It was when He had taken the book that the four beasts and the elders fell down before the Lamb. The Word is that through which power and influence from the Lord flow into heaven and the church, and cause them to bow down under a sense of His greatness and goodness. It is through the Word that He enters into the inmost feelings and thoughts of the mind, and bends our whole being into willing submission to His holy will. The harps are the symbols of spiritual affections, or affections of truth, or what is the same, of spiritual faith; and playing on harps means worship from faith. The golden vials are spiritual good or love, for gold is emblematical of love and goodness. But these golden vials contained odours, which are said to be the prayers of saints. They are like the censers of the Jewish Church, and mean the sweet incense of worship as it rises from the warm and grateful feelings of a humble mind and loving heart to the Lord as the Author of salvation. It may seem that in this incense the elders were presenting to the Lamb prayers which were not their own, and that their worship was mediatorial. We learn that, as there is one God, there is one Mediator between God and man. The Humanity of the Lord is the great and only Medium between the Creator and His creatures. When others appear to mediate it is because they represent the Mediator, and have an official, distinct from their personal, character. Persons represent principles; therefore saints, who are holy persons, represent holy principles. These are the saints whose prayers the elders present; they offer holy affections, for these are acceptable to the Holy One.

9, 10. With the music and incense of their holy affections, *they*

sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. The theme of this song is new in two respects. The Incarnation brought the Lord before heaven and the church in a new character, for redemption was a new work, as great as that of creation. But the Lord and His redemption had been lost to the church. The Lamb had been slain, His book had been sealed. This is the state of the church to which the Revelation of John refers. Now, however, the Lamb takes the book, and is about to open the seals; and the numberless worshippers, who raise to Him a new song of praise, represent the Universal Church, as redeemed from error, and inspired with the desire of rendering to the Lord the glory due to Him, as the Author of their deliverance and salvation. The song is also new as having for its theme the Last Judgment and the Lord's Second Advent. And as the Second Advent is attended with the new opening of the human mind, which enables men spiritually to perceive the Lord's spiritual Coming, the song of the worshippers of the Lamb is new. Individually also this song is new, when all that is here represented becomes in the worshipper matter of personal experience. The elders and others praise the Lamb, in this new song, because He had been slain, and had redeemed them to God by His blood "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Regarded in its relation to the Second Advent, the Lord is praised on the ground that, although He had been slain in the church by the denial of His sole Divinity and the Divinity of His Humanity, He had, nevertheless, redeemed His church from the dominion of this cardinal error and the evils which had resulted from it. The blood by which He had redeemed them is His Divine Truth. The shedding of His blood on the cross was indeed necessary for redemption; for the passion of the cross was the last temptation, in which the powers of darkness were overcome, and the work of redemption was completed. But the blood of the Lord, as an ever-living principle which has saving power, is His Divine Truth, which delivers and purifies those who receive it. It redeems us to God. The Humanity of the Lord is the Redeemer, but His Divinity is that to which we are redeemed. The Divine nature assumed the human to effect what pure Divinity could not have accomplished. As, again, the Son is the Divine Truth, and the Father is the Divine Love, Divine Truth redeems us from error and evil, and brings us to the Divine Love, which is the source of all blessing and happiness;

and those who are redeemed are redeemed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” These four classes include all who have anything of the church in them. Kindreds (or tribes) and tongues mean those who are in life and doctrine, people and nations, those who are in faith and charity. These are common states from which higher states are formed—those to which the redeemed were exalted, as in the words, *and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.* From being subjects they are made sovereigns. They now rule where before they had to serve. These two states are successive in the Christian life. We are subject when we obey the law of God from duty; we rule when we fulfil the law from love. This is the state of which Jesus spake to His disciples, “Henceforth I call you not servants; but I have called you friends” (John xv. 15); and in which they, after having followed their Lord, are exalted to thrones of judgment. It is the state also of which the apostle speaks, when he declares the true Christian to be not under the law but under grace. This state is spiritual, and those who are in the spirit of the law are no longer in subjection to the letter of it. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. v. 14, 22). Those, therefore, who are raised out of a state of obedience into a state of love are redeemed from among the peoples and nations, and are made kings and priests. And they are made kings and priests unto God. He is King of kings and Priest of priests. Those rule truly who rule in His Name and by His authority and power. This is as true of inward as of outward rule. The love which rules in the heart of the Christian is God’s love, and the truth which rules in his understanding is God’s truth. God’s truth in his understanding is as a king who brings every thought under subjection to Christ, and God’s love in his heart is as a priest who unites all the affections in worshipping and serving Him. The perfected Christian is, after the image of his Saviour, a priest after the order of Melchizedec; he is at once king and priest. Those whom the Lord thus makes kings and priests shall rule in the earth. The earth in the individual Christian is the earthly or natural mind. The true dominion of the Christian is dominion over his natural affections and appetites. This was the dominion originally given to man, dominion over all the earth, the complete subjection of the earthly to the heavenly in his nature. It is one of the

beatitudes, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Yes, blessed is the man who has acquired such rule over the affection of his natural mind as to have realized the petition, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

11, 12. Another order of celestial beings now come into view. *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders.* These angels form a circle beyond the beasts and the elders. And as what is exterior means also what is inferior, or lower, these angels are they who form a lower heaven than that which is represented by the elders. The number of these angels is *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.* Number in Scripture signifying quality rather than quantity, the character rather than the number of the angels is meant. There are two numbers mentioned, myriads and thousands, and they signify, the larger number truth, and the smaller number good. When two multiplied numbers, a greater and a less which have a like signification, are mentioned together, the lesser number is predicated of good, and the greater of truth, because every good consists of many truths, for good is formed from truths, and hence good is produced by truths. These angels John heard *saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* Like the elders, they praise the Lamb which was slain, as worthy to receive power. Denied and rejected by the fallen church, they see in Him that Being to whom all Divine attributes belong. Power, and riches, and wisdom are omnipotence, omniscience, and providence; honour and glory are all goodness and truth; and blessing is eternal felicity. The Lamb is said to be worthy to receive these, that is, to have them ascribed to Him as their true Possessor, and the Giver of them to heaven and the church, so far as these are able to receive.

13. After the innumerable company of angels, the song of praise is taken up by another class of worshippers. *And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.* These are not called angels, but creatures. In the religious sense creatures are those who are in the capacity of becoming, or have become, new creatures; here they mean those who have been reformed in the world, or created anew, but have not attained to the high state of those called angels. They consist of three classes, those in heaven, on the earth, and in the sea. The imagery

is, no doubt, taken from the three divisions of the natural world, the air, the earth, the water, and the creatures that belong to them, birds, beasts, and fishes. And by birds are meant those who are in the affection of truth; beasts, those who are in the affection of good; and fishes, those who are in the affection of knowing. These are indeed in heaven among the blest, which is meant by their ascribing blessing to the Lamb; but they are in a lower state, and therefore in a lower heaven, than those who are spoken of before them. A higher state in heaven, and a higher heaven as its result, are not produced by a mere gradation in the heavenly life, but by a state which is the inverse of the lower which precedes it. Qualities which are last in a lower state are first in a higher state. Among those in a lower state faith is higher than love; among those in a higher state love is higher than faith; and it is the same with all the other graces. This is indicated in the present instance by the circumstance that the same attributes are ascribed to the Lamb by these creatures as by the angels, but the order is reversed. The angels begin with power and end with blessing, the creatures begin with blessing and end with power. There are three attributes less in this ascription, "Riches, and wisdom, and strength." They have the first and the last, but they want some that come between. They have the qualities that form the grand outline, but they want some of those excellences that fill it with the fulness of Christian perfection; they have power but not strength, honour but not riches, glory but not wisdom; they have the outward qualities, but want the inward excellences that quicken and exalt them.

14. When the glorification of the Lamb, which had begun with those within and nearest the throne, and descended through all gradations of finite being to the lowest creatures of God, and the last sound of the glorious anthem had been uttered, but before it had died away, *the four beasts said, Amen.* The song of praise ends with those who commenced it. The song came out from the cherubim within the throne. And the Word which dictated the theme and inspired the song now responds to it with a solemn Amen. That which proceeds from the Lord through His Word should return to Him again, and receive His Divine approval. And only when the Word can answer our prayers and praises with Amen, can they be true and efficacious. Every act that is complete forms a circle. It returns into itself. It ends where it began. After descending from the inmost of the soul through the mind into the body, it ascends into the inmost of the soul again, there awakening a new responsive action, and producing a new state of humility and inward life, inscribing life

eternal on the table of the heart. Thus, when the four beasts said Amen, *the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.*

CHAPTER VI.

IN the last chapter the book sealed with seven seals was taken by the Lamb out of the hand of Him who sat upon the throne; the present is occupied with the opening of six of the seals.

1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. Although the Revelation as a whole does not describe the successive states of the church, but discloses its final state at the time of the end, yet there are particular parts of the book that give a glimpse of the successive stages of its decline. The present chapter is one of these. Yet even here the vision is only incidentally historical, from being coincident with the disclosure of the states of those who had belonged to the church in the successive periods of its existence. In this respect the opening of the first four seals describes the state of the church, as to its understanding of the Word, from its first and best state, when truth was in its purity and power, to its last and worst state, when truth had lost its life of love. In regard to the opening of the seals of the book, as part of the preparation for the judgment which was to follow, the Lord opens the seals in revealing the states of men, and the state of the church as composed of those who make profession of the religion which the Word contains. When the first seal was opened, John “heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.” The noise of thunder which followed the opening of this seal implies the responsive action of the immost heaven. Thunder, which affects the ear, is Divine Truth as it affects the will. Divine Truth in its power is also meant by the voice of the beast, which sounded like thunder. Of the four beasts which invited angels and men to “Come and see,” the first was a lion, the emblem of truth in its power. The opening of the first seal has a peculiar importance, not merely from the view which it disclosed, but for its being the beginning of the wonders which resulted from the unsealing of the book. It broke the silence which had rested upon the closed volume; and the thunder-sound of the first voice, which proclaimed its being opened, rolled through the whole heaven, and

descended even to the church on earth, impressing the universal mind with the idea of some great work impending, while the invitation to "Come and see" called all who had ears to hear to turn their minds attentively to the revelation about to be made. This revelation comes in the symbol which follows.

2. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him: and He went forth conquering and to conquer. We may here remark that the opening of the seals discloses, not what the Word of God contains, but what it reveals respecting the states of the church, and of those who had belonged to it, or who were to be judged according to what is written in the book. The first four seals disclose four horses of different colours, with riders of different characters; and they decrease in excellence, from the white horse, whose rider is a Conqueror, to the pale horse, whose rider is Death. If we regard these as representing four classes of persons on whom the judgment was to be effected, the series represents them all, from the best to the worst. And as these represent all who have belonged to the church, from its beginning to its end, they represent also the successive states of the church. To see the nature of these states, we must know the meaning of the symbols. What is the Scripture meaning of the horse? Animals, we have seen, are employed in Scripture as emblems of even the Divine attributes. How much more may they be employed as emblems of human qualities and powers? The horse, the noblest of all animals, represents the noblest of man's powers—his understanding. It is well known that the word "discourse" is derived from one that means to run to and fro, so that an act of the mind is expressed by a word that means a corresponding act of the body. It is on this ground that the horse, which carries us with rapidity and power, is an emblem of the understanding; and was so regarded in ancient times by profane as well as by the sacred writers. The winged horse of Greek mythology was evidently an emblem of the understanding of truth, or intelligence. Sprung from the blood of the slain Medusa, employed by Bellerophon to aid him in killing the chimæra, opening with a stroke of his hoof the fountain of the muses in Mount Helicon, and finally ascending to take his place among the stars,—can we fail to see in him an emblem of heaven-derived intelligence? Nor were these myths the pure inventions of a heathen nation, but the moulded traditions of an ancient church, being in their origin, if not in their nature, sacred. As the horse symbolizes the understanding, the horses which came out of the book when the seals were opened symbolize the understanding of the Word at different periods of the

church, and as it is in different minds. It is generally acknowledged that the apostolic was the church's best and purest age, from which time it declined, by losing or perverting the true sense of Scripture. This decline and the nature of it may be read in the appearances presented on the opening of the seals. When the first seal was opened, there appeared a white horse. The whiteness of the first horse describes the purity of the truth as it was understood in the first age of the church. This meaning of a white horse is very obvious from the appearance recorded in chapter xix, where, after all the tribulations of the church and the re-opening of heaven, the Word in its purity appears anew, represented by the Son of Man riding upon a white horse, the armies of heaven following Him upon white horses, and clothed in fine linen clean and white.

On the white horse was one who had a bow. The rider on the white horse is one who understands the truth and loves it; and the bow which He had in His hand is the emblem of doctrine. Truths are meant by arrows; and doctrine is to truth what the bow is to the arrow, it sends it to its mark, and gives it the force which makes it pierce "the heart of the King's enemies." Doctrine is a most important instrument in relation to the truths of the Word. The Word cannot be rightly understood without doctrine. The truth is not delivered in Scripture as a system, and much of it consists of apparent truth, or truth expressed according to the state of intelligence at the time of its revelation. The letter of the Word consists partly of genuine and partly of apparent truths. True doctrine is necessary to enable us to distinguish between these two forms of truth, and to draw our systems and creeds from the genuine truths of the Word, and explain its apparent by its genuine truths. As no one can rightly understand the Word without doctrine, no one without doctrine can rightly employ the truths of the Word either to build up a true faith or oppose a false one. One who cannot see the distinction between genuine and apparent truth cannot clearly see the difference between truth and error; since error for the most part consists of apparent truths adopted and confirmed as genuine truths. How can a church that does not itself know God's truth combat successfully against the errors and evils of the world? And still more important; how, in such circumstances, can the members of the church combat successfully against error in their own understandings and evil in their own hearts? And if one cannot discern and overthrow the errors and evils of his own mind, how can he become spiritually minded? The Christian Church, so long as its understanding of the Scripture was clear

and its doctrine sound, was like the rider on the white horse ; it went forth conquering and to conquer. The church, feeble and small as it was in its beginning, overcame the errors and the evils of the world, and spread the truth into all the kingdoms of the earth, subduing all things under it. Then also did the lives of the members of the church adorn the doctrines of the Gospel ; winning admiration even from the sternest of their enemies. To the church in this state is undoubtedly to be given the crown, not only of martyrdom for the truth, but of that still better martyrdom, self-immolation, in which the Christian lays down the life of his selfhood, in the cause of his own individual salvation, by the conquest of himself. This is the victory that wins the crown of everlasting life, the crown of wisdom and felicity. But this crown can only be secured by continuing the Christian warfare to the end of life ; the militant Christian must go forth conquering and to conquer. During this life, it is not enough that we conquer ; for after every conquest there is still some evil to overcome : our enemies are lively, and they are strong. The crown here given to Him that had the bow was not therefore simply the reward of victory. It was given Him when He went forth ; and His victories were to be won with this insignia of conflict on His brow, as kings wore their crowns in battle. The crown of wisdom is bestowed on the Christian for his faithfulness ; and when he has overcome, it is to him a crown of victory.

3, 4. The first and best state of the understanding of the Word is followed by one which indicates the commencement of declension. *And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red : and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another : and there was given unto him a great sword.* As white is the emblem of truth, red is the emblem of love. But there are two kinds of love, natural and spiritual ; and when natural love is separated from spiritual, it is evil. Red is here to be understood as the type of evil love ; for his rider takes away peace, and causes discord and division. The going out of this red horse describes what may be regarded as the first state of the church's decline, when the passions of men began to be inflamed with a love less pure than charity, with the love of their own opinions rather than the love of truth. It is known that early in the Christian Church, soon after the death of the apostles, this first sign of corruption and division began to appear. Not error, but evil, is the first active power in the decline of every church, as of every man. Evil begets error,

because it creates an inclination to believe what is favourable to itself. But that is another stage in the church's decline. The first effect of the ascendancy of evil is to take peace from the earth, and the second is to cause men to kill one another. Peace results from the harmony and union of goodness and truth, or of charity and faith, or what amounts to the same, of the will and understanding. This union in the mind gives peace, for when these two active powers and principles are in unity, the mind is satisfied and tranquil. When these disagree, there is no longer peace. This disagreement, first begun in the minds of the members individually, extends to the whole body; for minds that are not in harmony in themselves cannot be in harmony with one another. They take peace from the earth—from the church, of which the earth is the symbol. In reference to the individual, the earth is the natural mind, and this is deprived of peace when it is not controlled by the spiritual. It then rises in rebellion against the authority of the inner man, and there is conflict between them. When peace is gone, they begin to kill one another. This indeed is an ultimate result of discord in the church, as the history of the Christian Church too abundantly testifies. But the deadly discord here predicted is that which takes place between principles rather than persons. This strife is between evil and good, and between error and truth; and the destruction is that of good by evil and of truth by error. This is the natural result of the ascendancy of evil. This part of the apocalyptic prophecy answers to that in Matthew (xxiv. 6, 7), "Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars. Nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. These are the beginning of sorrows." The warlike character of the rider of the red horse is indicated by his receiving a great sword. In his case was most truly fulfilled the Lord's declaration, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The sword, the emblem of truth in the hand of the Lord and of those who combat in His Spirit and in His Name, is the emblem of error when wielded by the will of man, and in his own name. Even the truth, when employed by the church as an instrument of vindictive or sectarian oppression, is a most deadly weapon; for it is destructive of charity, and thus of the life of religion. Such wars are truly the beginning of sorrows; they take away peace from the earth. They even make charity and faith kill one another. They violate charity in exalting faith, and falsify faith in subordinating charity. The death of charity rather than of faith is the stage in the progress of religious destruction here treated of. The sword is a great sword; and great is spiritually expressive of the evil which the error contains; for great

is expressive of good, or, as in the present case, of the perversion of good, which is evil.

5, 6. *And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.* This describes a second stage in the decline of the church. The first is a departure from goodness and charity; the second is a departure from truth and faith. This has been the order of religious declension in every church which has existed in the world; the church has gone on from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zecharias. First charity, then faith, disappears from the earth—the church. As good is the firstborn in the rising church, evil is the firstborn in the declining church. When evil has once obtained an active existence in the church and in the mind, error follows as a consequence. For as truth condemns evil, its censures must first be denied or explained away, and then principles of faith must be adopted that sanction evil, or what is the same, that do away with the necessity of goodness as a condition of salvation. The red horse is therefore followed by a black one. As the white horse, which appeared first, symbolized truth, the black horse symbolizes error. The red horse signifies that the church had lost the true understanding of the Word in regard to the good which it teaches; and the black horse means that the church has lost the true understanding of the Word in regard to the truth which it teaches. First the will is seduced, then the understanding; first the affections, then the reason; or, to go back to the primeval symbolism, first Eve is deceived, then Adam. This may be further inferred from the third beast, which calls the church to come and see the black horse; for this animal had the face of a man, as the second had the face of a calf. The calf is the type of affection; the man is the symbol of reason, the perversion of which marks the present stage of the church's declension. The destruction of the true understanding of the Word, in regard to the truth which it teaches, being now treated of, the sequel directs us to the nature of its results. To express this a voice proceeds from the midst of the throne, or of the four beasts. We have seen that the four beasts were themselves within as well as around the throne. And as the four beasts, especially as they are within the throne, symbolize the Word, the midst of the beasts means the inmost of the Word. This announcement is therefore from the Word itself, and thus from

its essential truth as expressed in its spiritual sense. It had previously been said that the rider of the black horse had a pair of balances in his hand ; and this is an additional guide to the meaning of the symbol ; for these balances are the judgment in which the truths of the Word are weighed, and by which their value is estimated. The truths of the Word are meant by the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine. These are the children's food by which their spiritual life is sustained. But when the Church is in her declining state, the principles of the Word are lightly esteemed and held as of little value. A measure of wheat is sold for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny. The relative numbers of the wheat and barley do not express the proportional value of the good and truth of the Word which they represent. The numbers are significative. One measure of wheat is mentioned, because good is one, the unit of perfection ; therefore one measure of wheat means good as a whole, the entire teaching of the Word in regard to good or charity ; it is estimated at the smallest value, for the Roman penny was the smallest silver coin. And three measures of barley are mentioned, because three is predicated of truth, and means the whole of the truth, or the entire teaching of the Word in regard to truth. This language, therefore, tells us that, at the stage the church had now reached, the whole teaching of the Word had come to be, as weighed in the balance of human judgment, of the least possible value as the means of salvation. It does not necessarily mean that men despised or contemned the Word of God, but only that they so explained it, that the intrinsic value of its teaching was practically contemned, and held to be of little value. So far from the Scripture being theoretically contemned when its teaching is undervalued, it is often the object of superstitious veneration when its real value is gone. At the time our Lord accused the Jews of having made the commandments of God of non-effect by their traditions, the Word was held in great outward veneration. But in these cases the veneration is for the book rather than for its contents, or at least for the letter which killeth, rather than for the spirit which giveth life. But it is mercifully provided of the Lord, that when men become wise and prudent in their own esteem, the interior truths of the Word are hid from their eyes. When they have eaten of the tree of knowledge, the way is guarded to the tree of life. No longer fit, they are no longer allowed, to have access to what they would profane. So the voice which proclaimed the price of the wheat and barley, gave the warning, "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine." The wheat and the barley

are the good and truth of the literal sense of the Word ; the oil and wine are the good and truth of its spiritual sense. It was provided, as it always is, that when the church perverts and invalidates the teaching of the literal truths of Scripture, its spiritual truths shall remain unhurt. When, at the crucifixion, the soldiers parted the Lord's outer garment, His inner garment was preserved entire. If the inner principles of the Word were perverted, connection with the Lord through His Word would be cut off, and salvation be impossible. The wheat and the barley may be wasted, and the outer life suffer by the failure of the bread of life ; but the oil and the wine remain, and are the means of sustaining the inner life of the soul. Thus it is provided that in every case of destruction the vital part of the Word shall be preserved. "Fear not them which kill the body and have no more that they can do." The literal sense is but the body of the Word, and this only has man the power to pervert and destroy. The spirit that quickens is too pure to be discerned by those who are disposed to believe nothing which does not favour their earthly ends and views.

7, 8. And when He had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him; and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. In the pale horse and his rider who can fail to see the extinction of all that belongs to the Word as the Book of Life, and the death of the life-giving principles which it reveals? The pale horse symbolizes the understanding of the Word destroyed. The word pale several times in the Scriptures means green, as green grass (viii. 7). It is derived from a word that means the first tender shoots of grass, which are pale coloured. The colour of this horse may therefore be supposed to include the idea of life being arrested at an early age of the Christian Church, and its further growth and development prevented. If we consider this in connection with the wheat and barley, spoken of in the preceding verses, we may see a very significant allusion to the deprivation of life. Not only is the old corn of the land wasted, but the first shoots of the promised harvest are destroyed. And as the wheat and barley were sold for little, now the souls of men are killed with hunger. How expressive, yet how awful, the image now presented to us! The rider of this horse was Death. The extinction of all right understanding of the Word of God carries death into the church, and into the human mind. The purpose of the

Word is to lead us into the way of life; the perversion of its teaching leads us into the way of death. But this perversion does not simply deprive men of the truth which may become wisdom; it introduces into the church, and into the minds of its members, errors that lead to folly, and to the death of what is good and wise. Hell follows with him: for spiritual death is the forerunner of eternal death. Therefore power is given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill. The earth is the church; but a fourth part does not mean a portion only, but the whole. A fourth has the same symbolical meaning as four; and four, like two, signifies goodness and truth, or charity and faith conjoined. To have power over a fourth part of the earth, is to have power over these two essential principles, so as to destroy the conjunction between them. The power of the rider was to kill with the sword, or false persuasions; by hunger, or the want of heavenly knowledge; by death, or the extinction of charity and faith; and by the beasts of the earth, or the lusts of the flesh. The cherub that called men to see this sight was like a flying eagle. An eagle signifies intelligence, and intelligence consists in a right understanding of the Word. The present state is the opposite of this, the understanding of the Word destroyed. When this is the case, the state of the church is such as described in Luke, "Wheresoever the body is, thither shall the eagles be gathered together."

These four manifestations of the state of the church in relation to its understanding of the Word are very instructive, both from their signification and from the place in the prophecy which they occupy. They describe the understanding of the Word as it was in the primitive age of the church, when the truth was known in its purity, and exerted its power. This was the first state of the church. The second state of the church was when she began to decline from her primitive purity, but from love and charity rather than from faith. As evil leads to error, the next stage in the decline of the church was a departure from true doctrine, which led to a misunderstanding of the nature and means of spiritual life. And the last stage was one in which evil and error had taken the place of goodness and truth, when in consequence all true understanding of the Word was lost, and Death and Hell rode unresisted over the face of the earth, with universal ruin and desolation in their train. This description is placed at the very beginning of the prophecy, so far as it relates to the progress of events, because all the evils and calamities of the church have their beginning in corrupting the good and truth of the Scriptures. So far as the Word is interpreted to favour evil inclinations

and practices, so far spiritual light and life depart from the church, and darkness and death invades it, till at last nothing of the church or true religion remains. This is the consummation which has now arrived.

9. The opening of the next seal shows a continuation of the state which we have now considered. *And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held.* Death had killed, and Hades had swallowed up the fourth part of men; and here we find the souls of them that were slain under the altar, crying for deliverance. As the corruption and misuse of the Word of God has been described by the vision of the four horses, those under the altar are said to have been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held amid the prevailing corruption. The altar, under which these slain and longing souls are bound, is in that region of the spiritual world which is neither heaven nor hell, but the hades of the Scriptures and of the early church. In course of time this was corrupted into purgatory. Purgatory is the middle state, so explained as to make it an engine of priestly rule and aggrandizement. Like heaven and hell, hades is a state, and thence a place. It is the state of those who have passed out of the world before they enter their final abode in heaven or hell. The middle state is a result of the law to which man is subject, that change of state is not effected suddenly, but gradually. The middle state is not probationary, but only preparatory. Probation ends with this life, and the soul's state at death continues to eternity. All that the soul's temporary residence in the middle state effects, or is designed to effect, is the removal of whatever is not in unison with the essential state of the mind, as determined by its ruling love. The internal life is never changed. All that is effected in the middle state is to bring the external into conformity with the internal. The oneness of these is heaven or hell. In ordinary circumstances this unity is soon effected. But in some cases the process is prolonged, and even arrested. This is the case when the church on earth has become corrupted. Truth and error, and even good and evil, become so mixed in the minds of its members, that they cannot, under existing circumstances, be separated. Like the wheat and the tares, they must grow together until the harvest. This is the general judgment. Such a judgment takes place at the end of every church, which has been supposed to be the end of the world. When the time of judgment draws near, preparation is made for its accomplishment. An essential part of that preparation consists in opening the book out of which all

are to be judged. And this opening is coincident with exposing and removing the errors which have sealed it with seven seals. In proportion as the Book of God is opened, the books of men's minds and lives are opened also ; for the sealing and opening of the one are coincident with the sealing and opening of the others. When the change begins to work, the good in the middle state begin to see and feel their captivity, because they begin to see and feel the power of opened truth in removing the spiritual oppression under which they have been held. These are the souls under the altar. Their place indicates both a state of sanctity and of safety. Being in a state of holiness, which is essential worship, they had been preserved and protected by it. They are the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. This does not mean that these were the souls of the martyrs, but the souls of all who had been spiritually slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. The state of the church which brings such sufferings on the faithful arises from perversions of the Word. Those who adhere to its truth are opposed by those who have framed for themselves another gospel ; and those who hold to the testimony of Jesus suffer from the opposition of those who have adopted another Saviour. For in the last days there arise false prophets and false Christs, so that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. If the Lord Himself suffered, much more must they of His household. And they suffer after His manner. He suffered as the Word, not as the Word which was with God and was God, but as the Word made flesh. Not as Divine Truth, but as Divine Truth clothed with human nature. In the disciple, pure truth cannot be tempted or slain, but apparent truth can. This is the body which men, by means of false doctrine, can slay. But in the faithful, the soul of pure truth and goodness survives.

10. These are the souls that *cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* The souls under the altar being those in the middle state who had maintained their faith in the Word of God and in the Son as the Divine Man ; those who had slain them are those of an opposite character, who were also in the middle state, and there opposed themselves to the faithful, who had found shelter and safety under the altar of worship dedicated to the only God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The loud or great voice which these holy ones raise is the voice of love or goodness, which greatness signifies. They cry to the Lord, How long ? A despairing cry is expressive of the extremity of

temptation; for all spiritual trial is attended with this deep sense of desolation. In these trials the Lord seems as if He attended not to the sufferings of His servants. But these states of extremity are God's opportunity. They are permitted, that self-renunciation may be the greater, and deliverance and the sense of it may be more complete. In these states the infested ones, however much they may long, and however near they may be to absolute despair, never relinquish their trust in the Lord. These suffering ones therefore address Him as holy and true, which is an expression of their confidence in Him as Justice itself, of which holiness and truth are the elements. They cry in their anguish, "Why dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?" which expresses a desire for deliverance, not for vengeance, which is not the meaning of the word. They ask that their blood may be avenged. The shedding of blood signifies violence offered to the truth which they had loved and lived. To avenge their blood on those who dwelt on the earth, is to deliver their life from those in the middle state who had been professed members of the church, but were inwardly evil.

11. The first answer to their prayer was that *white robes were given unto every one of them*. They received from the Lord pure and holy truth. This was what they required. Those who had suffered for conscience sake had suffered from a defect of truth in the church. That defect was now supplied. But their deliverance was not yet. *It was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* We have here a very striking evidence that tribulation cannot be brought to an end until the iniquity which produces it is full; for this would heal a wound superficially, while enclosing impurities that would cause it to break out again, and so prolong and increase the disease. God sees not as man sees; He knows the times and the seasons. The states of the good and of the evil must be fulfilled together. This double fulfilment brings out the ultimate result, which is the separation of the evil and the good, and the consignment of each to their own place. All the Lord's works, including the work of judgment, are done according to the laws of Divine order, which are grounded in mercy as well as justice. Divine Omniscience saw that all truth and goodness would be destroyed in the church, and that then the end would come: and these principles are meant by the fellow-servants and brethren of the supplicants, and their destruction is meant by their being killed.

12-14. The opening of the sixth seal discloses the end, not the

judgment itself, but the end or complete subversion of the church. *And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal; and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.* Every one may see that this entire description is symbolical. It is so similar to a prediction in Joel (ii. 31), which Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 20) applied to the end of the Jewish Church, that there is no room for doubt that it relates to the state, and indeed to the end, of the Christian Church. As the earth is the figure of the church, her luminaries are figures of the celestial powers by which the church is sustained. The sun becomes black, the moon as blood, and the stars fall in showers to the earth. According to sacred language, the sun is the symbol of love to God, the moon is the emblem of faith, and the stars of knowledge. First, there is a great earthquake, which means an entire subversion of the church. Then the luminaries are darkened and thrown down; love, truth, knowledge, are blotted out. But the luminaries are not only said to be darkened, but the appearances are described by comparisons. The sun is black as sackcloth of hair, because sackcloth was the garment of mourning for the dead and for sin, and hair is emblematical of the most external truth, which is called sensual. The blackness of the sun being as that of sackcloth of hair, is intended to express the darkness which is produced by the men of the church becoming carnally minded. The moon is said to be as blood, because, as we have seen (ver. 10), blood, as of one killed, means violence done to truth, by which it is deprived of life. And the stars are said to fall to the earth, as a fig-tree casteth her untimely, or unripe, figs, because the unripe fruit of the fig-tree means immature good, and this is cast down to the ground when the mind is agitated by violent reasonings, as the fig-tree is by a mighty wind. When the luminaries are extinguished, heaven itself departs as a scroll when it is rolled together. When love and truth become darkened, and knowledge fails, the spiritual mind, the heaven in which they had been placed, becomes closed, which is here meant by its being rolled together as a scroll; the mind being compared to a book, in accordance with the figure in the previous chapter, and in chapter xx., where the judgment is treated of. And when the heaven is departed, every mountain and island are moved out of their place. Mountains and islands are the

principles of love and faith in the natural mind. These are moved out of their place when goodness and truth, and therefore love and faith, no longer occupy their rightful place in the Christian mind; then disorder prevails, and ruin follows in its train.

15-17. In this state of dissolution *the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.* The persons disclosed by the opening of this seal are very different from those shown by the opening of the preceding one. These flee to the dens and rocks to hide themselves from the face of the Judge; those under the altar desire and pray for His coming to judgment. Those were the meek and oppressed; these were the lofty and the oppressors, with their subjects and dependants. In the spiritual sense kings symbolize those who are in truth; great men those who are in good; rich men those who are in the knowledge of truth; chief captains those who are in the knowledge of good; mighty men those who are learned; the bond those who know from others; and the free those who know from themselves. This is their signification in the genuine sense. But here the kings and others are to be understood in the opposite sense, in which error takes the place of truth and evil of good, in which knowledge is perverted, and learning is employed to confirm what is false, and the people, both the bond and the free, love to have it so. All these are represented as hiding themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, upon which they call to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. This state of terror and apprehension is not caused by any severity or wrath on the Lord's part. He is love itself and wisdom itself, and never willingly afflicts the children of men. It is evil that slays the wicked. Their opposition, or the contrariety of their state, to the Divine purity and light is that which causes them to suffer torment. The sufferings of the evil arise from their coming into conflict with the Lord's love and wisdom, when these act directly upon them, as in the time of judgment. Hence they desire to escape the direct rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and therefore hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. These are the same mountains that had been removed out of their places; and when love to God is removed out of its place, it becomes perverted into the love of self; and the dens and rocks of the mountains of self-love are the evils and falsities that belong to that love; and in these the evil seek shelter from the judgments of God. And they call upon the mountains and rocks to

fall upon them, not to crush them but to hide them. It is opposed to popular opinion, and yet it is true, that the wicked cast themselves into hell ; and they do so because the sphere of hell is agreeable to their nature, while the sphere of heaven is opposed to it. Heaven is heaven only to those who are heavenly-minded. Heaven and hell are nothing as places separate from the states of those who dwell in them. Heaven would be as much a place of torment to the demon as hell would be to the angel. It is the moral atmosphere of heaven that makes it delightful to the good and afflictive to the evil. And the more of Divine heat and light the heavenly atmosphere receives, the more anguish does it inflict upon the evil who attempt to breathe it. The anguish which the wicked feel from the influence of the Divine Sun, they regard as the effect of Divine opposition and wrath. And thus these evil ones desire to be hid from the face of God and the wrath of the Lamb. There are two objects of dread and apprehension to the evil, the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom, or, the Essential Divinity and the Divine Humanity ; and these are meant by the face of Him that sits on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb. Of the two objects of their dread the wrath of the Lamb seems the greatest. Jesus may be supposed to be the great object of impious apprehension, inasmuch as these, having abused His saving mercy, may now chiefly dread His presence. *The great day of His wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand.* But why the day of His wrath ? Can Jesus be capable of wrath ? Does not this forcibly show that Divine wrath is relative and not absolute ? Wrath in the Lamb ? And yet to the evil how real it is ; for the contrariety of their state to His pure love and infinite tenderness is a terrible reality ; and the greater the contrariety of their love to His, the more wrath do they see in Him, and the more torment do they feel in themselves.

CHAPTER VII.

IT has often been remarked that the imagery of the Book of Revelation is to a great extent taken from the Israelitish Church. In clothing the last prophecy respecting the future states of the Christian Church in the symbolism of the Jewish economy, which was one of types and shadows, the Author of the Revelation has given at once a proof of its symbolic character and a key to its interpretation. In the present chapter we have the component parts of the Old Testament

Dispensation brought before us in the twelve tribes of Israel ; while in its great multitude, which no man could number, we have the mixed multitude that accompanied the people when they went up out of Egypt. These two distinct bodies represent those who are saved both within the Church and among the Gentiles. The sealing of the hundred and forty-four thousand out of all the tribes of the children of Israel, is an interesting and instructive part of the prophecy. It is not judgment, but part of the preparation for it. Much of the Revelation describes the laying open of the states of the evil. This part treats of bringing into light the states of the good, and thus bringing them within the sphere of the Divine protection, till their day of decision, when they will be gathered into the sheepfold of the church triumphant in heaven. This is meant by the holding of the four winds, and the sealing of the twelve tribes, which we have now to consider.

1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. The four angels represent the whole angelic heaven, and the four corners of the earth the whole world of spirits. In that portion which now follows, we read much of the descent of angels from heaven, and the ascent of spirits from hell, as if both were contending for the possession of this middle region, and of those who occupy it. And this in fact is the case, especially so at the time of impending judgment. Angels desire to raise all to heaven, evil spirits desire to drag all down to hell. Angels are employed by the Lord to throw the shield of their protection around the righteous ; yet they can only protect and preserve those on whom they can lay hold through the good that is in them. And when they have set the seal of God upon their foreheads, no evil power can hurt them. The angels' holding the four winds is descriptive of a function which heaven exercises and a use it performs in regard to the good who are to pass under the judgment. The wind is a common emblem of the Spirit of God, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We read also of the four winds being called upon to breathe upon the slain, on receiving which they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army (Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10). Angels, as ministering spirits, or instruments by whom the Holy Spirit operates, are called by the same name. "The Lord maketh His angels spirits," literally, winds (Ps. civ. 4). On the day of Pentecost the Spirit came from heaven as a rushing mighty wind. But the apostles were in a state to bear

the outpouring of the Spirit in its might. Not so those who were waiting to be sealed. The Spirit was indeed to enter into them, but they were not yet able to bear it in its power. The angels were to moderate its influence. The four winds were to be held that they should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. In the proximate sense the earth and the sea are the whole world of spirits. In the spiritual sense they are the internal and external of heaven and the church. Abstractly they do not mean places but states; the will and the understanding of those who were to be sealed, or what is the same, their states of goodness and truth. But why of all earthly objects should the trees be singled out for protection? Because these noble productions of nature are symbols of those noble outgrowths of the mind, cognition and perception. The command, therefore, to the four angels who held the four winds, is a command to moderate the influx of Divine Truth from the Lord out of heaven, so as to prevent it from acting too powerfully on those who have any perception, however obscure, of goodness and truth, on the principle that the Lord does not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax.

2, 3. While the four angels held the four winds, John *saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* The character of this angel differs from that of the others. They stand on the four corners of the earth, he ascends from the rising sun; they hold the winds, he carries the Divine seal. There are two kinds of angels, who represent the Lord as to the two essentials of His nature, Wisdom and Love. The four angels represent the Divine Wisdom; the angel from the rising sun represents the Divine Love. Those angels, therefore, who had the control of the four winds are representatives and instruments of the Lord's Wisdom, and he who ascended from the rising sun is a representative and instrument of the Lord's Love. It is love that makes and marks the children of the living God; for love is life, and the Lord lives in those only who are principled in love to Him. The angel that ascended from the rising sun cried with a loud voice, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees." The four angels, we have seen, represent the Divine Wisdom; the angel from the rising sun represents the Divine Love. We have here another instance of the way in which the essential attributes of the Lord operate. Love acts through wisdom, wisdom acts from

love. These angels, then, are emblems of the wisdom and love of God, as they act upon those who are principled in truth and love, until they are sealed and safe from all evil influence.

4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. The twelve tribes of Israel, it is almost needless to say, do not here mean the carnal but the spiritual Israel. They evidently symbolize the Lord's true church, or those who had served the Lord faithfully in the church on earth, and were now to be received into the church in heaven. But it is not sufficient to know that the twelve tribes of Israel mean the Lord's church. We must know what the church itself means. We know not the real truth on this or any other sacred subject till we view it abstractly. The church essentially consists of principles, and of persons who have made those principles the essence and guide of their life. The twelve tribes of Israel represented, and here signify, all the principles of the church, or all the graces and virtues that form the kingdom of God in the human mind. They mean persons, it is true, but they mean the persons whose hearts are the throne and whose lives are the support of these principles. The principles of the church are few and simple. They are contained in the two commandments, To love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. What the law and the prophets teach, the Gospel confirms. Jesus came not to destroy, but to fulfil. He magnified the law and made it honourable, not that it should be set aside, but that it might be exalted and honoured by His disciples. These principles constitute the church; yet they are received and practised in different degrees by the members of the church; this produces a variety in the state and character of those of whom the church consists; and it causes variety of condition and relative place even in heaven itself. Heaven is not a promiscuous throng, but a perfectly organized body, in which every member has his place, and in that place finds his proper function and use and his highest happiness. Heaven is in the best sense the Lord's mystical body, of which all the individuals are members. As in the body, so in heaven, there are general divisions and particular distinctions. These we shall see brought out in the sealing of the twelve tribes; for these symbolize the church and heaven, as formed of those who have the principles of the church and heaven within them.

The numbers sealed out of all and each of the tribes are evidently mystical. Numbers are expressive not so much of quantity as of

quality. The number twelve is the root of all the numbers of the tribes singly and unitedly. This number is the product of three and four, and three is a number that has relation to truth, and four is a number that has relation to goodness; and the number produced by their multiplication is expressive of the union of these religious principles. This is the reason that the same number was sealed out of each tribe, although the tribes themselves differed much with respect to numbers; for all who are really members of the church on earth, and can become members of the church in heaven, must be in the union of truth and goodness, or, what is the same, of faith and love.

5-8. There is now an enumeration of the tribes out of which the twelve times twelve thousand were sealed. The twelve tribes of the Revelation are different in two respects from the twelve tribes of the Old Testament; the tribes themselves are different, and the order in which they are named is different. In all the series the first and the last are the most important; for these give a character to all the others that come between. In the entire series of the tribes, as enumerated by John, Judah is the first, and Benjamin is the last. Judah represents the principle of love, and Benjamin represents the principle of truth in act, or truth conjoined to love. This connection between Judah and Benjamin was represented in their historical connection, when these two tribes formed together the kingdom of Judah, after the ten tribes revolted and formed the kingdom of Israel. The new heaven, formed of those sealed out of the twelve tribes, takes its character from that principle which forms its most prominent or essential part. Love to the Lord pervades it, and forms its ruling characteristic.

In the form of heaven, so to speak, there is a repetition of the same order, descending through its several degrees; for that which is first reproduces itself in every lower degree in which it exists, till it closes in the last, on which it rests as on a foundation. In every degree of a series there are three constituent elements. In philosophical language these are end, cause, and effect; in spiritual language, they are love, wisdom, and use; or, goodness, truth, and obedience; or, charity, faith, and works. Taking the tribes by threes, they all have relation to these principles as they exist in a series. Heaven consists of two kingdoms; and in each kingdom there is an internal and external part. The first six tribes describe those who form the Lord's celestial kingdom, and the other six tribes describe those who form His spiritual kingdom. Taken in threes, the first three are those who constitute the internal, and the second three are those who constitute the external, of

the celestial kingdom, and the last two threes are those who constitute the internal and the external of the spiritual kingdom.

The particular meaning of the twelve tribes, as here numbered, will shed light on the constitution and character of heaven, as formed of those whom the sealed out of the twelve tribes represented. The first three tribes sealed are Judah, Reuben, and Gad; and the second three are Aser, Nepthalim, and Manasses. These represent the internal and the external of the Lord's celestial kingdom. The internal of that kingdom is love to the Lord, and its external is mutual love. Love to the Lord is represented by Judah, and mutual love is represented by Aser. But every love has its consort, and every marriage has its fruits. The consort of love to the Lord is wisdom, and the fruit of their union is use: the consort of mutual love is perception, and the fruit of their union is good works; the consort of charity is faith, and the fruit of their union is obedience; the consort of natural affection is knowledge, and the fruit of their union duty.

There are several aspects in which the twelve tribes may be viewed, as there are several aspects in which heaven and the church and the regenerate man may be regarded. There is the distinction of the entire heaven into three heavens and two kingdoms; and there is a distinction of the whole heaven and the church into internal and external. As representing the two kingdoms of which heaven consists, the twelve tribes are to be considered as consisting of two divisions, each containing six tribes, of which the first six represent the celestial kingdom, and the other six represent the spiritual kingdom. As representing the three particular heavens, of which the whole heaven consists, the twelve tribes are to be considered as consisting of four divisions of three tribes each. The first three tribes represent the highest heaven, the second three represent the middle heaven, and the next three represent the lowest heaven, the last three representing the connecting mediums between the Lord and each heaven, and between the three heavens themselves. Of the last three tribes, Zabulon represents those who form the conjoining medium between the highest heaven and the Lord, Joseph represents those who form the conjoining medium between the middle heaven and the Lord, and the tribe of Benjamin represents those who form the conjoining medium between the lowest heaven and the Lord. Under that still more universal distinction of internal and external, which takes in both the church in heaven and the church on earth, and both the Christian and the heathen world, the internal consists of the twelve tribes, and

the external consists of the great multitude which no man could number. Each heaven is represented by three tribes, because each heaven consists of three general principles or elements. The tribe which is first named in each series signifies some principle of love which belongs to the will, the tribe which is named after it signifies some principle of wisdom which belongs to the understanding, and the tribe which is last named signifies some principle of use derived from them which belongs to the life. Thus each series is full and complete in itself. The same three principles exist in, and indeed constitute, each heaven ; but the three constituents differ in degrees of perfection. The love, wisdom, and use which exist among the angels of the highest heaven are more perfect than those which exist amongst the angels in the lower heavens. And the difference between them is so great, that they cannot communicate with each other but through intermediate angels, which partake of the character of both. In each heaven there are degrees of perfection, but these degrees, though numerous, are minute, gradually shading off from the greatest to the least, as light and heat decrease from the centre towards the circumference. These degrees may therefore be called continuous, and are imperceptible. The case is quite different with the heavens in regard to each other. They differ not by continuous, but by discrete or distinct, degrees. They do not therefore run into one another, but only correspond to each other.

The existence of three distinct heavens results from there being three distinct degrees in the human mind ; for heaven, as the Grand Man, is analogous to heaven in the individual man. These degrees of the human mind, which answer to the three heavens, are successively opened or developed by regeneration. The opening of the first or lowest degree makes the regenerate inhabitants of the first or lowest heaven ; the opening of the second degree makes them inhabitants of the second or middle heaven ; and the opening of the third or highest degree makes them inhabitants of the third or highest heaven. Those in whom these degrees are severally opened, and who therefore enter into and form the corresponding heaven, are represented by the different tribes, taken in threes. The successive sealing of the tribes describes their reception, beginning at the highest and proceeding to the lowest. In the highest heaven are those who have been regenerated to the highest degree, having attained the highest heavenly grace, which is love to the Lord above all things. These in the Word are called the children of God ; they are in a state of innocence, not the innocence of ignor-

ance, but the innocence of wisdom ; and as they are in the highest perfection of love and wisdom, they are also in the highest perfection of use. Their love, wisdom, and use, which are the necessary elements of all heavenly perfection, are represented by Judah, Reuben, and Gad, the first three tribes which were sealed. In the second heaven are those who have been regenerated, not to the highest but to the next degree, who have attained the heavenly grace of love to the neighbour, the grace which is like unto love to the Lord. These in the Word are called friends of God. They have not the innocence and entire dependence on the Lord which characterize those called the children of God, but they have been brought into a friendly relation to their Saviour, which makes them willing to do whatsoever He commands them. The intellectual consort of neighbourly love is intelligence, which comes of reason, being inferior to wisdom, which comes of perception ; and the fruit of the union of these graces is the virtue of good works. These three may be otherwise expressed as charity, faith, and works. These are represented by Aser, Nepthaim, and Manasses. In the ultimate or lowest heaven are those who are in obedience, whose principle of life is a sense of duty. To do what they believe to be their duty, they must know what their duty is ; this knowledge is the consort of the sense of duty that inspires them ; and the fruit of this union is fidelity to known obligations. These are meant by the tribes of Simeon, Levi, and Issachar. These three general states, and the three heavens corresponding to them, are so distinct that they can only communicate with each other by conjoining mediums. The twelve tribes do not include the tribe of Dan. What can be the reason? Dan, whose lot was on the north border of the land farthest from the temple, represented those of an external character who are most remote from the Lord. The tribe of Dan was not to form a part of the new heaven, for the same reason that in the new earth there was to be no more sea. Yet this tribe is not lost ; for it is meant by the great multitude which no man could number, which comes now to be treated of.

9, 10. *After this—the sealing of the twelve tribes—John says, I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.* Those who were sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel are all who were saved out of those who formed the visible church ; and the great multitude are those who

were saved from among the Gentiles. It is a great and blessed truth that salvation is placed within the reach of all men. And not only is salvation possible to the Gentiles, but many of the Gentiles are saved, which is undoubtedly intended to be taught from the multitude around the throne being innumerable, which means that none but the Lord knows their interior character, and, therefore, that He alone can judge them. Numbering means, however, something more than this. It means ordinating or bringing into order. Order is heaven's first law. It brought the cosmos out of chaos; and now it brings harmony out of discord, unity out of division, and power out of weakness. Truths are the laws of order, and they produce order by introducing distinctions and relations, without which order does not exist.

It is deserving of remark that there is, in these relations, no clue to the curious question, Are there few that be saved? Neither in the sealing of the twelve tribes, where the numbers are evidently mystical, nor in the gathering together of the great multitude, whose number is unknown, is there any means of knowing the actual or relative numbers saved. If there is any ground for conjecture, it is that the saved are not few but many—so many that no man could number them. Truth enables us to distinguish good from evil, a distinction which children, for instance, cannot make until they receive the necessary instruction. Where no law is there is no transgression, and sin is not known but by the law. Truth further distinguishes between genuine and spurious good. Spurious good is that which is done without discrimination to the good and the evil, the deserving and the undeserving alike. Truth furthermore distinguishes between different kinds and degrees of good. Of these there are many. There is celestial good and spiritual good, interior good and exterior good; the good of innocence, the good of love, the good of faith. Good is formed by truths; hence good varies, and becomes manifold, so manifold that no angel, spirit, or man is in the same good as that of another. Heaven consists in variety as to good, and by that variety one is distinguished from another. If all had the same good, there would be no distinctions. Yet these various goods are divinely arranged so as to constitute together one common good. The Divine Good, being infinite, is one; but with finite beings it varies in quality and quantity from its reception in truths, for good has its quality from truths, and truths are manifold.

The righteous Gentiles who do not receive the truth relating to the Lord the Saviour in this life, receive it in the other. The great multitude are therefore said to be clothed with white robes, which are the

emblems of truth, and to have palms in their hands, which are emblems of the good which truth teaches. When in the other life good Gentiles are instructed in the truth, they readily acknowledge the Lord as their Saviour. The great multitude are therefore represented as standing before the throne and before the Lamb, and as crying "with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." They acknowledge the Lord in His Humanity, and not only so, but they acknowledge His Divinity and the Divinity of His Humanity. For in heaven there are not two Divine Objects of worship but one, and that one is the Lord Jesus Christ. But these are represented in vision as two; for there is a perfect distinction between the Divine and the Human of the Lord, as there is between the soul and the body of man, and it is most important this distinction should be understood. When it is represented or described, and thus brought down to the sphere of finite thought, and the distinction is presented in vision, the Divine essentials appear as Divine persons. It is evident that neither angels nor men can see God as He is; they can only see Him under the veil of some appearance which He is pleased to assume or produce. The ascription of salvation to the Lord by the Gentiles shows that they had experienced the saving efficacy of the Lord's work in the flesh. That Divine work provided for the salvation of all, both by the subjugation of the powers of darkness, and by the glorification of the Lord's assumed human nature. These works included all mankind in all worlds. And those who never heard of the Lord and His salvation in this world may be able to see its blessed design, and trace its saving operations in themselves, when they come into the other world.

11, 12. While the unnumbered multitude thus raised their voices in thanksgiving to the Lord for His great mercies, *All the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* If there is joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, how great the joy of those blessed ones over the salvation of an unnumbered multitude out of the whole known world! The sublime spectacle presented before the spiritual sight of John, is one from which Christians can draw comfort, and for which they can adore the Divine goodness. The multitude offer their thanksgiving standing; these fall upon their faces when they worship. The angels, the elders, and the four beasts are the angels of the three heavens. The "angels" con-

stitute the lowest heaven; and as the ultimate degree includes all the higher degrees, these angels are said to be round about the throne and the elders and the four beasts. And, on the same principle, their worship includes all worship from first to ultimate principles. Worship from both is expressed by the Amen with which they begin and end their adoration, the deep humiliation of which is expressed by their falling on their faces, and its fulness by the expressions employed. The seven ascriptions are expressive of that fulness in holiness. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom are expressive of the Divine Truth, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might of the Divine Good; but the last two mean good in its operation or power. Thus the angels ascribe to the Lord all wisdom, love, and power. And when these are ascribed to Him for ever and ever, or for ages of ages, it not only means eternity in relation to the Lord Himself, but the desire that the Lord may be present with His love, wisdom, and power, in all the ever-progressive states of angels and men.

13, 14. *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?* Every holy desire and every true prayer for heavenly light comes from heaven. Thus the elder asks John the question which John himself desired to ask, and which a heavenly instructor could alone answer. One of the elders asks this question and gives the answer, because the Divine influx which suggests and answers the inquiry comes through the angels of the second heaven, who are distinguished for intelligence, since they are more receptive than others of the light of truth. The elder therefore answers, *These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* It is considered by some that these were martyrs. But the tribulation they had suffered was not in the natural but in the spiritual world. Those of the Gentiles who are saved undergo a preparation for heaven in the world of spirits. Heaven consists in the union of good and truth, or charity and faith. And those who have not known the truth in this life must receive it in the next, and have that truth joined with their good, before they can become inhabitants of heaven. It is in effecting this union that they undergo tribulation, for conjunction cannot be effected without temptation. The tribulation experienced may be great; for temptation is severe according to the errors that have been believed as truths, and the degree of regeneration effected by it. The new truths which the Gentiles receive in the other life are of course those which relate to the Lord, His life, and His sufferings and death in the world. These were the procuring means

of salvation to all men. The benefit which the Gentiles derived from the Lord's work is described by an expressive figure. The multitude had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Much is said in the New Testament about the Lord's blood. We have already considered the subject (chap. i. 5), where we have shown that the Lord's blood, figuratively, is His death, and, spiritually, is His truth, for His adherence to which He died. There may seem to be no connection between these, yet there is. The Lord came into the world as Divine Truth, or the Word. The opposition He encountered from men was opposition to the truth He uttered and lived, and His death was sought as the effectual means of putting Him to silence. In that instance the wrath of men was turned into the praise of God. His persecutors became the unwitting and unwilling instruments of furthering the plan of redemption.

The gate of life, closed, like the gate of Paradise, by man's fall, was opened again by Christ's resurrection. In Adam all died, in Christ shall all be made alive. By man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. It was necessary that Christ should die, that He might conquer death, and open again the way to the tree of life. There was this essential difference between the Lord's death and that of all other men. Men died as the victims of their own sin, the Lord died as the victim of other men's sin, and as the martyr to His own righteousness. He had and preserved in Himself the seed which, when sown in the ground and dies, brings forth much fruit (John xii. 24). There is a saying that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. In an infinitely higher sense, and to an infinitely greater extent, is the blood of the Lord the seed of the kingdom which is to have no end. The blood of the martyrs was but the type of their fidelity to the Lord's truth; the Lord's blood was the type of His fidelity to His own truth, and therefore of the Truth itself, which in His Person suffered at the hands of men, and was glorified by the power of God. That Truth, now exalted into union with Love, from which it came forth, sends out its light and its truth to lead men to the altar of the Humanity, which sanctifies the true worshipper. The efficacy of the Lord's truth, as symbolized by His blood, is expressed in various ways, especially by drinking it, and by washing in it. The purifying power of truth is that which is set before us in this instance. The multitude had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is exceedingly expressive in their case. The righteousness of the Gentiles, however sincere and correct, must be exceedingly imperfect, regarded from a

Christian point of view and seen by the light of Christianity. There can be no true righteousness without truth, and it is only so far true as it is done according to truth. It may be sincere under any religion, but true only so far as the religion is true. The religions of heathen nations are not only defective, but erroneous. As all truth leads to good, all error leads to evil. Yet the evil which a religion does not condemn or which it sanctions is not deadly, if the religion is sincerely believed, and is followed as faithfully in its right as in its wrong teaching. A Mahometan, whose religion allows him a plurality of wives, may live in polygamy without being guilty of a deadly sin. But the principle and practice of this part of his religion must be given up before he can enter heaven. This is a dark spot in his garment, which must be washed away by the blood of the Lamb, for Christian truth condemns and heaven abhors it. Many other practices taught or sanctioned by the religions of heathen nations are in their nature so much at variance with order and purity that they would taint the atmosphere of heaven, and must be abandoned, and even abhorred, before the soul can associate with the pure in heart who see God. Where there is sincere religion they can be corrected. It may easily be supposed that in giving up all that they have believed and lived that is inimical to the truth and righteousness of the Gospel, they must pass through great tribulation. And much labour and self-sacrifice must be undergone before they can have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Some suppose that all that is required of the penitent is to believe that the blood shed on the cross is the price of his sin. But as the Lord's blood means His sufferings and death, His blood purifies and saves us through our suffering and death. The Lord's crucifixion is realized to us in our crucifixion; His sacrifice in our sacrifice. Men wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb by receiving the truth, and using it to cleanse themselves from the impurities of the world and the flesh.

15. The great multitude having passed through the needful purification, *therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.* This is one of the few passages of Scripture from which it may be, and has been, inferred that worship is the sole occupation of the blessed in heaven. The description is evidently figurative, and affords no just basis for dogmatic teaching. In one respect it is evidently so. In the New Jerusalem it is said there shall be no night there; here it is said the redeemed shall serve Him day and night in

His temple. There cannot be perpetual day in heaven, if by this we mean unvarying light and glory. There, as here, the sun for ever shines in his brightness ; but there also, as here, there are clouds that veil his glory, and revolutions that hide his face. No created and finite being can for ever gaze upon the sun, or maintain a state of unchanging mental or bodily activity. Only One there is who never slumbers nor sleeps. All creation, spiritual as well as natural, must subside, occasionally or periodically, into a state of repose. Life is sustained, strength is renewed, and states are perfected by alternation of states. Day and night, in this world of effects and shadows, have their answering or corresponding states in the world of causes and realities. And not less beneficent, as suited to the nature of the soul, are the changes in heaven, than are those in the world as suited to the nature of the body. Angels are not mere ethereal beings. Every soul has a body ; the only difference being that in this material world the soul lives in a material body, while in the spiritual world the soul lives in a spiritual body. Day and night are produced in the spiritual world by the alternate action and reaction of the soul and of the body. It is day when the soul acts upon the body ; it is night when the body reacts upon the soul. When the tide of life flows freely from the soul through the body into action, it is day. The faculties of the mind, alive and active, find a responsive activity in the sensories and senses of the body. But when the body, more crass and less capable of sustained action than the soul, begins to show signs of fatigue and exhaustion, the shades begin to gather round the soul, and gradually deepen till night closes upon it. As sense becomes dim, perception becomes obscure, and gradually fades, until the whole being sinks into unconsciousness and repose, except it be the waking state in sleep, when dreams, instructive as beautiful, come as secret visitants from Him who gives to His beloved in sleep. In heaven itself there is no night, and yet every one has experience of the grateful vicissitudes of activity and repose, of sleep and wakefulness. Day and night are not fixed states, returning in periodical succession. They are not produced by the revolution of the whole heaven, by a motion independent of the will and the states of its inhabitants, as on the earth. Days and nights are not there caused by outward but by inward changes, and not by general but by particular alternations of state. These states do not pass at once, or in regular general succession, over the whole heaven, and not necessarily over a whole society. There is probably some general sympathy even with respect to sleep among those who inhabit that world,

where all are as one man ; but there is not uniformity. In this world day and night, and the activity and repose which they ensure, come regularly, and also exist simultaneously. It is always day and always night, and the inhabitants are always asleep and always awake, and indeed are always sleeping and always waking. But in the eternal world there is no time, although there is an appearance of it. Days and nights, and weeks and years, do not come *upon* the inhabitants, but come *from* them ; so far as they exist, they are the effects and measures of the changes that go on in their inward states of mind. Day and night especially are the effects of their inward and outward states. Their inward and lucid states are their days, and their outward and obscure states are their nights. Both of these states are heavenly. The principles which rule universally in their minds are never entirely inactive, much less are they ever supplanted by others of an opposite character. A greater light rules their day, and a lesser light rules their night ; but the light is the same, though it comes to them directly in the one case, and reflected in the other. The multitude before the throne of God serve Him day and night. Not that they are eternally engaged in worship, or in what we call worship, but they serve the Lord in all states, both internal and external, both bright and obscure. They are constantly in His temple, in a holy state and frame of mind. They are especially in a state of truth, which is meant by the temple. The tabernacle and temple, both mentioned in this book, are emblematical of good and truth, or of worship from these two distinct principles in the human mind. And as the multitude of Gentile souls had now received the truth, of which they had been destitute in the world, therefore their continuance in the truth, and serving God from it, rendering to Him an intelligent service, is expressed by their being day and night in the temple. But the temple was also an emblem of the temple of the Lord's body ; and their being in the temple is descriptive of their being in the Lord by the acknowledgment of His Divine Humanity ; and when they are in the Lord, the Lord is in them, which is further expressed by the words, "And He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them ;" and to dwell *among* them is to dwell *in* them. They dwell in Him by faith, and He dwells in them by love. Or what is the same, when they serve Him in truth, He fills them with good. Truth is the receptacle of good ; and the quality of good which men receive is according to the quality of their truth. Those, therefore, who had received the truth of heaven were now able to receive its good.

16, 17. The multitude having accepted the truth as it is in Jesus, and in that truth received the good which it is His desire to give, they were brought, after their state of tribulation, into one of rest and peace, and after their state of privation into one of abundance. *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* Hunger and thirst after righteousness have the promise of being satisfied. This promise is exceedingly appropriate and expressive here. These Gentiles had hungered and thirsted in the world. They had desired good and truth which they did not possess; for every one who is spiritually minded craves the meat and drink by which the spiritual life is sustained. But their craving remained unsatisfied. They had desired to see the things which we see, and had not seen them, and to hear those things which we hear, and had not heard them. But now that they had passed through their desert state, and had come into a land of abundance, they would be no longer tormented by unsatisfied desires for good and truth. The hunger and thirst here spoken of is not the desire which gives a relish for food and drink, but the hunger which remains unappeased, and the thirst that remains unquenched. It is the ravenous hunger and burning thirst which are felt under the scorching heat of a burning sun. And therefore, with the promise of the absence of hunger and thirst, is given the assurance that they should not suffer from the rays of the sun nor any heat. This combination is found in our spiritual experience, when, with the absence of the good which nourishes and the truth which refreshes, there is the presence of the loves of self and the world. The double promise of no gnawing hunger and burning thirst, and no burning sun and fainting heat, is therefore the promise of the presence of the goods, and the absence of the evils, of life. While the Lord gives the good and the truth that sustain, He removes the evil and the false that oppress. For He shall feed them with the good of His love, and refresh them with the truth of His wisdom. The allusion here is to the green pastures and running streams, which are the beautiful emblems of the living good and truth which the Lord supplies to those who follow Him and trust in Him as the good Shepherd. And when this is the state and experience of the faithful, all sorrow and sighing shall cease; "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." All spiritual affliction shall cease when evil is removed and good is imparted, and with it all sorrow and sighing. There is a peculiarity or singularity

in the terms used in respect to the different operations of saving mercy that deserves attention. The Lamb is to feed them, but God is to wipe away their tears. Further, it must be considered that the two names are used for the sake of variety, or that the Lamb and God are two distinct persons or two different beings. And yet the description seems to be inconsistent with either notion. If God is represented as sitting on the throne, and the Lamb is said to be in the midst of the throne, surely this is inconsistent with the idea either of the inferiority of Jesus to God, or of His distinct personality from God. God is on the throne of heaven, Jesus is in the midst of it. God is the Lord's Divinity, and the Lamb is His Humanity; and, in accordance with this, God is the Divine Love, and the Lamb is the Divine Wisdom, or the Divine Good and the Divine Truth. The Lamb feeds and waters His flock, for His Divine Wisdom instructs them, but God wipes away their tears, for His love comforts them; His wisdom fills their minds with wisdom, His love fills their hearts with joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

BETWEEN the opening of the seventh seal, with which this chapter commences, and the opening of the sixth, great changes and important events have taken place. The earth has been shaken to its foundation, and heaven has departed as a scroll; the twelve tribes have been sealed, and the innumerable multitude out of all nations has been seen standing before the throne of God. All these are signs of preparation for judgment, but not of judgment itself. The last of the seven seals that closed the mystic book, held in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, and hid its contents from the eyes of angels and men, is at length opened by the Lamb. And very singular and extraordinary is the immediate effect of the disclosures made by the complete unrolling of the volume. *And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.* The sacred volume had been sealed by the false interpretations and corrupt practices of the church. Not all at once, but gradually, had the Holy Book been sealed; and not all at once, but gradually, were the seals now opened. As the seals were successively opened, the errors and evils which had sealed the book were successively disclosed; and when the bursting of the last seal had laid open the last of the evils which had gradually closed it, heaven was awed into

silence by the sum of the dread account. Silence! How expressive! Language is the utterance of thought; but there are thoughts too deep for utterance. There are feelings that do not even take the form of thought and express themselves by sounds; but there are feelings so intense as to paralyze the very organs by which sound is uttered. The expressive silence of the church in heaven, when the state of the church on earth was entirely revealed, tells of its unutterable corruption and decay. And it tells, moreover, that so great was the contrariety, and so complete the severance, of the church militant and the church triumphant, that they had no thoughts and feelings in common. When the church on earth is entirely corrupted, the church in heaven is mute. There is no sympathy and no co-operation. Zacharias was struck dumb, because he did not believe the angel; the angels were struck dumb, because what they saw was beyond belief. The silence in heaven continued about the space of half an hour. There are no hours in heaven, because there is no time there. In the spiritual world instead of time there is state; and changes of state give the appearance and form the measure of time. Time there has no fixed and uniform progression; it can stand still, like the sun upon Mount Gibeon, and can go back, like the sun on the dial of Ahaz. These miraculous phenomena in the natural world, are glimpses of changes which are in perfect harmony with the economy of that world, where time is but the shadow and the reading of state. An hour, a day, a year, an age are but the symbols of states begun and completed. An hour may be the last as well as the first of the particular states which make up the whole. When our Lord said, "No man knoweth the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man cometh," He spoke of the closing period both of the church and of human life. When there was silence in heaven, the last hour of the church had come. But the silence was for about the space of half an hour. Had the silence continued for a whole hour, the consummation would have been so complete that no New Church could have succeeded that which had passed away. There would have been an end, after which there could be no beginning. Half an hour is an end, but not a complete end, an end which is followed by a beginning. It is such an arrest of decline as that of which the Lord spake when He said, "Except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved."

But what was the nature of the disclosure that produced this silence in heaven? The last act of the Church on earth, which put the last seal on the Book of Life, was the establishment of the dogma

of salvation by faith alone. That was the act of the Reformation, and is the distinguishing doctrine of the Protestant religion. Are we to suppose then that Protestantism was only an evil and a calamity? The church had all but sealed the book before the time of the Reformation. The Reformers put the last seal upon it, and delivered it as a sealed book to the people, from whom it had been carefully withheld. The emancipation of the Book was the grand achievement of the Reformation. It brought back the sun ten degrees by which it had gone down. But although it lengthened the day, it did not prevent the coming of the night. The day of the true church is ever advancing; its sun is ever ascending. When it has once reached its meridian, and has begun to decline, it must finally set. The decline of the church is like a disease which has reached a certain stage, when it becomes incurable. Before the Reformation the disease of the church had advanced too far to admit of a complete cure. The church was like the woman in the Gospel who had an issue of blood twelve years; she had suffered many things of her human physicians, and had spent all she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse; and the new remedy of the doctors of the Reformation was but another human nostrum, whose only merit consisted in this, that it differed entirely from those of their predecessors, being in fact only one extreme produced by another,—faith alone as the antithesis and the antidote of works alone. They saw no way of separating merit from works, but by excluding works from salvation. This final and fatal error was the seventh and last seal which closed the Book of Life; and the opening of that seal disclosed its destructive nature and effects. These are described in the marvellous things which took place on the blowing of the seven trumpets by the seven angels.

2. On the opening of the seventh seal, John says, *And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.* As the opening of every seal laid open the particular evils which had caused that seal to be affixed to the book, and so far closed it, the opening of the seventh seal brings to light the characteristic evil of the doctrine of faith alone, and these are disclosed by the sounding of the seven trumpets. Who were these seven angels that stood before God, to whom seven trumpets were given? As the seven churches mean the one Universal Church, and the seven spirits before the throne mean the one Omnipresent Spirit, so the seven angels standing before God mean the whole angelic heaven, but more especially the heaven to which faith alone is directly opposed. There are two great principles which constitute heaven—love and faith. There are

angels who are more in love, and others who are more in faith. Those who are more in love form the highest heaven, and those who are more in faith form the second heaven. A false faith is opposed to all in heaven, for all are in the true faith, or in the faith of the truth, but it is more directly opposed to the angels of the second or spiritual heaven, where truth and faith predominate. These angels may be said to be the ministers of truth, as the higher are the ministers of good. They are the watchers upon the walls of Zion, who give warning of approaching foes, and lead to the disclosure of hidden dangers. These are the seven angels to whom were given seven trumpets. The trumpet, of which so much use was made in the representative church, and the sounding of which overthrew the impregnable walls of Jericho, and scattered the swarming hosts of Midian, is the symbol of Divine Truth, which nothing can resist, when given by the Lord to willing and humble recipients, as the seven trumpets are said to have been given to the seven angels; for angels like men can take nothing except it be given them from heaven, or from the Lord who Himself is heaven. As the sounding of their trumpets is to shake the whole system, sun, and moon, and stars, and earth, the angels are brought into interior and close union with the Lord; they stand before God, that in the day of trial heaven may be under the Divine influence and protection.

3, 4. When the seven angels had received their trumpets, *another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.* This angel represents the celestial heaven, which is in love; and he comes to perform a work of Divine love before Divine truth begins the work of judgment, for in judgment the Lord remembers mercy. The seven angels stood before the throne, this angel stands before the altar. As a throne is the symbol of government from truth, an altar is the symbol of worship from love, and this too is meant by the golden censer. The seven angels received seven trumpets; to this angel is given much incense. The incense that ascends to God is first received from Him. The prayers that reach the throne of grace are those which have first descended into the heart of the worshipper; and even the fire which burns upon the altar of the human heart, from which the golden censer of holy thought is to be filled with live coal, like that which touched the lips of the prophet, is kindled from heaven; for the use of strange fire brings death to him who uses it. But the much incense given to the angel was to be offered with the prayers of all saints.

Who were these saints? and why were their prayers to be offered at this particular juncture, between the giving and the sounding of the trumpets? Judgment is preceded by separation. When the nations are to be judged, "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The separation or separations which precede judgment, are treated of in the whole of this prophecy, till we come to the twentieth chapter. That to be effected by the blowing of the seven trumpets, is the separation, in the middle state, of those who had been nominally, from those who had been actually, in the doctrine of faith alone. From this to the end of the fourteenth chapter treats of the state of those who had belonged to the Protestant Church, of which salvation by faith alone is the distinguishing tenet. In the middle state the good and the evil of this church were mingled together, as the sheep and the goats, the tares and the wheat. The day of decision was approaching, when the good were to be raised up into heaven, and the evil were to be cast down into hell. This is the last result of the judgment. But before the two opposite classes can be judged they must first be separated. If this separation consisted in ranging them on two sides, the separation might be easily and quickly effected. But that which had held them together in one undistinguished body was an apparent similarity of character. As the tares of Scripture are similar in appearance to the wheat, and as even the wolf can put on the sheep's clothing, there is no way of distinguishing them but by bringing out their inward qualities, and making them appear in their real characters. This cannot be done at once, but by degrees; and successive acts, by which the interior states of the evil were to be laid open, are described by those which followed the sounding of the seven trumpets, the sounding of the trumpets describing the influx and operation of Divine Truth, by which their states of heart and life were laid open, and the outward appearance of sanctity and virtue, under which they had concealed themselves, were stript off or cast aside. In fact, the separation of the really and the seemingly righteous is effected by the state of the internal man being brought out and made manifest. The sifting and rending by which this is effected might distract and injure the good, while the evil are yet connected and associated with them, or, as the parable expresses it, the wheat might be rooted up with the tares, were not Divine provision made for preserving them. One of these means consists in bringing the good into closer connection and conjunction with the Lord, so that His protecting influence may be around them. This closer connection is effected by an influx of the

Lord's love through the celestial heaven, which acts upon the inmost and purest of the affections. The angel that came and stood before the altar is a type of this highest heaven; the incense that was given to him is a symbol of the Divine influx, of which the celestial heaven was the medium; the saints with whose prayers his incense was to be offered are the good yet mingled with the evil, but about to be separated from them; and their prayers are their love and worship, or the elevation and dedication of their hearts to the Lord, by which they become more closely united to Him. Everything indicates that this worship was the worship of love. The angel, as belonging to the priestly kingdom, is one who worships from love; his incense is in a golden censer; and he offers the prayers of all saints upon a golden altar. Those whose prayers he offers are saints, a name expressive of their spiritual character; and the offering which he mingled with their prayers was incense, which symbolizes holy thoughts, thoughts proceeding from love, as the smoke of the incense was produced by the fire from the golden altar. *The smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.* The grateful incense of pure angelic love, which mingled with the prayers of saintly affection, ascended up before God, as a sweet-smelling savour and as an odour of rest. Sweet is the offering of gratitude and love, and powerful to secure for the soul repose in the providence of God.

5. But while the ministry of the angel drew the saints, in the times of peril, into closer connection with heaven and conjunction with the Lord, and thus into a state of more perfect security, it produced a different effect beyond the circle where the saints reposed. *The angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.* The same holy fire which had kindled the devotions of the saints, and raised their prayers as grateful incense to the throne of God, now descends in flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, rending the earth with its power. In this we have a striking illustration of the truth, that the same Divine love kindles and consumes, and produces peace or tribulation, according as it falls into congenial or uncongenial minds. So true is this, that the warmth and bliss of heaven, and the fire and pains of hell, have the same origin: the same Divine love glows in the heart of the angel and burns in the heart of the demon, because received in its purity by the one, and defiled and perverted by the other. The same celestial angel filled the same golden censer with the same holy fire as when he offered incense with the

prayers of all saints, but the fire which caused the smoke of the incense to ascend up before God with the prayers of all saints, now descends in lightning flashes and pealing thunder, and the earth heaves convulsively. Those among whom the holy fire now falls are the sinners who had been mingled with the saints. Their prayers had not ascended with the incense which the angel offered on the golden altar. The Divine love kindled no devotion in their hearts ; and now, when it flows more powerfully into them, it produces only tribulation. How expressive is this effect of the influx of Divine love amongst them. They had lived the life of faith alone, which is a dead faith, because without love and charity. And that love which ought to have been the life of their faith now becomes its death. That which they refused to receive as their friend, now manifests itself as their enemy, not because it has any enmity to them, but because they cherish deadly enmity against it, the whole state of their mind and of their life being opposed to it. When the Divine influx brings out the interior and previously hidden thoughts and intents of the heart, then arise the voices of conflicting reasonings, and the flashing of passionate thoughts, and the thunderings of violent affections, and the earthquakes of inward convulsions, that subvert the whole order of their previous life. This, however, was but the beginning of their sorrows, the first disclosure of their real state, the first act of that drama in which the true character of faith alone was to be exhibited in its completeness, and which we are now to trace in the wonders that follow the sounding of the seven angels.

6. *And the seven angels, which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.* Preparation is endeavour. We prepare for action by the acquisition and disposition of means. The angels had acquired the means: trumpets had been given to them : they now prepared to use them. And when heaven is to be instrumental in the performance of any great work, all its efforts must be employed to use the means which have been bestowed, so as to accomplish the use which the Divine Being designs to effect by it.

7. Preparation being made, *The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.* The blowing of the trumpets describes the searching of hearts by the power of Divine Truth from the Lord out of heaven ; the effects of the sounding of the first trumpet describe symbolically the first disclosure of the character of a fruitless faith, and therefore of those who practically hold it. The

rain that descends in fruitful showers, and the warmth diffused by the sun's rays, are emblems of truth and love, as they flow from heaven into the human mind. But when the rain-drops are frozen in their descent into hailstones, and the beneficent heat of the sun has been changed into destructive fire, we have emblems of truth turned into error and good into evil. The imagery is very expressive in relation to the present subject. Faith alone is cold, because it is without love, and binds up the truth, as cold congeals the water into ice. According to the same beautiful imagery, "The Lord giveth snow like wool, He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes, He casteth forth His ice like morsels" (Ps. cxlvii. 16). But He gives His truth in this form because it has passed through a cold moral atmosphere; and the snow and hail lie upon the surface as a wintry garment, until the Lord "sendeth out His Word, and melteth them: He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow." Faith without love receives the descending truth, as the wintry earth receives the descending rain; but when the living Word and Spirit of the Lord are sent out from God and received by men, then is the frozen truth melted, and its waters flow as streams in the desert. Far different was the case when the angel sounded. Then descended hail, not acted upon by the melting warmth of heavenly love, but with the destructive fire of infernal love, and these are mingled with blood, to indicate that faith alone is not only an error and an evil, but mingles with them the perversion of truth through false interpretations, by which truth is deprived of life. As fire and hail are generated in the atmosphere and fall upon the earth, so here, when the hail and fire mingled with blood followed the sounding of the trumpet, "they were cast upon the earth." When evil and error are generated or formed in the mind, they descend into the life; or they are produced in the internal and descend into the external. The result of the influx of Divine Truth is to make manifest that which was hidden, to bring out that which had been within, to proclaim upon the housetops that which had been spoken in the ear in closets. It is by this means that judgment is ultimately effected. The effect of the casting of the destructive elements upon the earth was, that the third part of the trees was burnt up. It is characteristic of those whose states are now being disclosed, that they are fair without and false within; like the barren fig-tree, they have abundance of leaves, but they have no fruit. And as, at the word of Divine Truth, the fig-tree withered away, so here the trees and the green grass are burnt up. Those within the church who make

a profession of faith, have a natural affection for, and perception of, the truths of Scripture. These are the trees and the green grass. But when the false principles of the inner man are brought out, and especially when the hidden fire of self-love begins outwardly to burn, these affections and perceptions are burnt up. It is here said that a third part was thus destroyed; but a third part, like three, is a figurative expression for the whole.

8, 9. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood: and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. The previous calamity fell upon the earth; this falls upon the sea. The earth is a symbol of the natural mind of man, but, considered a terraqueous globe, the land and the sea are symbols of the will and the intellect. In the spiritual sense the land is considered to be surrounded with water, so that the land is within and the sea without. As a figure of the church, the earth, under these two divisions, represents the church as consisting of those who enter more into the interior mysteries of the faith, as the clergy do, and of those who only hear and believe, like the laity. Fire had been cast upon the earth, and now, as it were a burning mountain is cast into the sea. The same fire that was cast upon the earth now extends itself to the sea. The fire which is kindled in the will soon invades the intellect; that which begins at the centre soon spreads to the surrounding parts. Inflamed self-love is the burning mountain, and the intellect is the sea into which it was cast. The blood into which the sea was turned is perverted or falsified truth; the fish that were killed, and the ships that were destroyed, are the knowledges and doctrines of truth, which perish when self-love is excited into activity. The rather singular phraseology that the creatures that were in the sea, and had life, died, is similar to that in the vision of Ezekiel (chap. xlviij.); where the holy waters flow from the sanctuary into the sea, and the waters are healed; “And everything that liveth, that moveth, shall live, and there shall be a very great multitude of fish.” The knowledges of religious truth in the natural understanding may be living or they may be dead. The love of knowing for the sake of use is the life or soul of knowledge; take that love away and it dies. To express it otherwise, every thought in which there is affection is alive; take away the affection and the thought dies. That case in Ezekiel, and this in the Apocalypse, are the antithesis of each other; life is imparted to knowledge in the first case, and life is taken away from it in the

second. But how can this knowledge be said to die if it were already dead? Because knowledge could not exist as such if it had not some religious use as its life. No doctrine, however erroneous, is without its use, and that use keeps it alive. Every creed holds men together for some useful purpose, which could not exist so well, if at all, without it. True, the creed may tell of great spiritual degradation, and may even have been framed so as to allow, or not condemn, some particular evil; yet it imposes certain bonds that prevent unbridled licence. This may be illustrated from the Scriptures themselves. The Jews were permitted by Moses to retain some of the customs of the nations, such as polygamy and easy divorce, but the evil which could not be prevented was mitigated by being brought under legal restrictions. And as Providence is in all history and in all religions, as well as in those of the Jews, every false religion and every heresy is a permission, and therefore has a mission. Every error is indeed an evil, because every departure from truth is a departure from goodness; but every error has some good in it, which is its life, without which it could not exist. Such is the case in this natural and preparatory world, where there is an unavoidable mixture of good and evil, of truth and error. In the other world it is different. Good and evil, truth and error, are there separated. There men must either be good or evil, true or false; they cannot in any degree be both. Their predominant love, or end of life, determines which they shall be. If their predominant love be good they will forsake the evil; if evil, they will reject the good. It may seem that this separation might be effected in a moment. Not so. Human nature there is still human. Although the place of existence is different, the laws of life are the same. The human being must be changed by successive degrees. Conditions which have been gradually produced during the course of a longer or briefer life on earth, and which have been wrought into the system by education, discipline, and habit, cannot be changed but by a gradual and sometimes painful process. This process is representatively described in the Book of Revelation, some parts of it in the successive changes produced by the sounding of the seven trumpets. That which we are now considering, the dying of the creatures in the sea that had life and the destruction of the ships, describes the extinction of any vitality which their religious knowledge had possessed, and the destruction of any truth which their doctrines had contained. For we are not to forget that the evil are the subjects of these sifting or disrupting acts. There are good and evil men in every religion. The best religion cannot save the evil, the worst re-

ligion does not condemn the good. The life it is that condemns or saves; and the advantage of truth over error consists in this, that truth is the highway and error is a byway, and the more devious and entangled, the greater the error. Yet every earnest and honest wayfarer will find his way terminate in the heavenly country. These earnest and honest ones, who had lived among the nations, are the great multitude whom no man could number; and the earnest and honest ones who had lived in the church of faith alone, are the saints whose prayers the angel offered upon the golden altar. The indifferent and dishonest are now subjected to the scrutinizing and levelling power of Divine Truth. When the burning mountain was cast into the sea the third part of the sea became blood, an expressive symbol that self-love, when it enters and occupies the natural mind, turns all its knowledge of truth into the falsity of evil; when every thought in which there is any life of affection dies out, and every doctrine in which there is any useful tendency, or which performs any useful work, perishes.

10, 11. *And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.* Everything connected with the sounding of the first three trumpets indicates a progressive disclosure of spiritual states of mind from more outward to more inward, as if the disguises were being stript off one by one, that the real internal state might be laid bare. First, the hail and fire are cast upon the earth, then the burning mountain is cast into the sea, and now a burning star falls from heaven. The first kill the trees, the second kills the fish, and this the men. Heaven is the type of the inner man as the earth is of the outer. The stars of heaven are emblems of the interior knowledges of truth, or of interior truths themselves, that have become objects of apprehension. With the good these interior truths or knowledges of truth, shine with a clear and steady light; but with the evil they are fluctuating and evanescent, like wandering stars. That which fell from heaven was a great star; for it is the knowledge or intelligence relating to faith alone, as the one great doctrine of the Protestant Church, the state of which is the subject of this part of the Revelation. Faith is the star of the Reformation. It is the one great principle by which it is distinguished, and to maintain, explain, and defend which, all the intelligence of the church is employed. But when the trumpet of

celestial truth sounds, the star falls from heaven, and falls like a burning lamp, for its light is artificial, as that of an earthly lamp compared to that of a heavenly star. The star is seen as a burning lamp, when the fire of self inspires human intelligence, which has assumed the appearance of Divine truth. And it falls upon the rivers and fountains of waters, or upon the interior truths of the church and the Word. As the sea is emblematical of exterior truth, such as the literal sense of the Word contains, rivers and fountains are emblematical of interior truths, such as the internal sense of the Word contains. The star which fell upon these waters is called Wormwood. That which to the eye was a burning lamp, to the tongue was intense bitterness. The truth, which in itself is sweeter than honey, becomes bitter as wormwood when turned into falsity. As Satan can appear as an angel of light, self-intelligence can appear as heavenly wisdom; but as, when Satan like lightning falls from heaven, he appears in his own malignant character, so self-intelligence, when it falls from the high place it had usurped, appears in its own nature, burning from self-love, and bitter from falsification of truth. And when this undisguised self-intelligence enters into the truths which have been acquired from the Word as truths of faith, it turns them into what is false. They also become wormwood. The many men that died of the waters because they were made bitter, are the human principles that become destroyed by the falsification of the truths of the Word. When men are mentioned in the Word, the faculties by which man is man are meant. The chief of these is reason. When true rationality is destroyed, all that is truly human in man is destroyed. This is the condition which is here to be understood.

12. *And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.* The work of devastation proceeds. A great star had fallen from heaven, and now the whole heavenly host is smitten. The sun, moon, and stars are the emblems of love, faith, and knowledge, as the life and life-giving principles of the church. This imagery is frequently employed to describe the end of the church, both in the Old and in the New Testament. Here a third part is said to be smitten, but we have already stated that the number three, in whatever form, is expressive of completeness. In the present instance it is evident that a third part is not meant; for what can be the meaning of the day and night not shining for a third part? The day and the night are expressive of the spiritual states of

life to which these natural times correspond: they are expressive of those which belong to the internal and external man, or to the spiritual and natural minds; for it is day when the mind is in spiritual light, and night when it is in natural light.

13. As the states we have considered have now reached a consummation, a change takes place. *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!* A transition state is indicated by this angelic visitant. The three calamities which follow differ widely in their character from those which precede. The angel seems as if sent only to announce the woes that were to be experienced by the inhabitants of the earth; but all angelic messages are Divine interpositions to moderate the ills which Divine Providence cannot in the nature of things prevent. Angels, as they are instruments, are also representatives of the Lord, and specifically of His love or His truth, or of Himself in the character of Love or Truth. In the Word the Lord is said to have wings and to fly. The truths of His Word are His wings; for by these His love makes its way into the hearts of angels and men. The wings of the wind, on which He is said to fly, are the spiritual truths of His Word, which, in the highest sense, constitute the Spirit of Truth. As the Lord is omnipresent by His Spirit, its flying is expressive of its operation in respect to finite beings. The Spirit comes to angels and men when they receive it, and it approaches them more nearly as they receive it more interiorly. Interior reception of the Lord's Divine truth is here expressed by the angel flying in the *midst* of heaven. And heaven here does not mean only the heaven where angels dwell, but the heaven of the human mind where angelic principles reside. The sending forth of this angel at the present juncture indicates a Divine influx into the inmost of the minds of those who were still outwardly connected or associated with the evil in the world of spirits or middle state, in order to draw them into closer connection with the Lord Himself, so as to protect them from the calamities that awaited the wicked, and the more easily to effect their separation from them. These are called the inhabiters of the earth, because of their earthly or merely natural state; the earth denotes also the natural mind, which, both in the evil and in the good, would be subjected to the woes of spiritual affliction. These have, however, opposite results with the opposite classes; for that searching of Divine Truth which separates good from the evil separates evil from the good. And this separation of principles effects the

separation of persons. If there were no good in the evil and no evil in the good, they could have no communion with each other. When the good and evil are no longer of mixed character, they no longer mix with each other. The good attach themselves to the evil by the good they seem to have, and the evil attach themselves to the good by their seeming evil. We speak of evil and good as seeming possessions; for whatever does not form an essential part of the character is seemingly but not actually theirs.

CHAPTER IX.

1, 2. WE observed that the appearance of the flying angel marked a transition state. The scenes which come now to be described are different from those already considered. *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit: and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.* Deeper states are now to be opened up than those which have preceded. Hitherto the sounding has acted upon the heavens and the earth; now the lower, if not the lowest depths are to be revealed: this angel opens the pit of the abyss, the bottomless pit. The sounding of the fifth, like that of the fourth angel, brings a star from heaven unto the earth. Human error causes heavenly knowledge to descend to the earth, and turns that which in itself is true and a means of blessing into what is false, and a means of cursing. As a true faith opens heaven and shuts hell, so a false faith shuts heaven and opens hell. Such is faith at the beginning, and such is faith at the end of the church. The star that guided the wise men to Bethlehem, the day-star that arose in men's hearts, in the first days of the church, in its last days is cast down from the heaven of the spiritual mind to the earth of the natural mind, and even opens the lowest depths of the sensual principle. In regard to those in the middle state, to which this relates, the opening of the bottomless pit, or the pit of the abyss, is the opening of hell itself, with which the evil were in connection, and to which they were tending; and the appearances which it presented represent the nature of the false principle of salvation by faith alone. First there arose a smoke, as of a great furnace, which darkened the sun and the air. The furnace is an emblem of

the love that prevails in hell, as the sun is of love as it shines in heaven; the smoke is emblematical of error, as the air is of truth. Evil produces error, as fire produces smoke; and error darkens the mind, as smoke intercepts the rays of light that come from the sun of heaven.

3. *And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth.* The smoke being emblematical of false thoughts that issue from evil affections, the locusts which come out of the smoke are emblematical of the nature of such thoughts, and the operations of the locusts of their dreadful effects. This swarm from the smoke of the pit demands our attention. Although the description of these mystic creatures answers in some particulars to the locust, in others it is entirely unlike. Singular in their form and character, they combine some extraordinary, and in some respects incongruous qualities. The locust is often mentioned in Scripture, and is there regarded as a terrible scourge. Coming in countless numbers, they darken the air, and when they alight on the earth devour every green thing, so that before them is the garden of Eden, behind them is a desolate wilderness. Every animal in nature is the emblem of some human affection, the nature of which may be seen in the character of its symbol. But a man by his true or perverted intelligence may impart some qualities to the natural affection that forms no part of its original nature. The perception of this by the wise men of antiquity no doubt produced the compound animals of heathen mythology; and the same fact is represented in the locusts of the Revelation. Locusts are types of the affections of the human mind that are nearest to the senses, that regard all things from a sensual ground, and love and pursue them for the sensual gratification they afford. But every affection has its corresponding thought; for affection, considered in itself, is simply blind desire, and thought is the eye which guides it to its object. It is thought that gives any affection its peculiar form and character, and to the thought we are to trace the singular characteristics of the locusts that came out of the smoke of the abyss. *Unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.* From the benumbing effect of its bite, the scorpion is the emblem of that power of persuasion which belongs to the intellect of the sensual man—the man who reasons from, and judges by, the evidence of the senses—the power of stupefying the reason and making the mind torpid. And what is more calculated to benumb the active powers of the mind than the notion that salvation is the result or the reward of faith alone? How often do we hear, as a splendid testimony to the efficacy of

this solitary faith, that reconciliation with God and peace of mind, which for years men had vainly sought by repentance and righteousness, have been brought at once to the conscience and heart by an act of faith? What is this but the sting of the scorpion striking the mind with torpidity? There is no reconciliation, no peace, but in goodness; and there is no true goodness except in the subjugation of self and the exaltation of God; nor can these be attained without repentance and amendment, and without changing the ends and purposes of life. The cry of Come to Christ as you are; seek not to command yourself to Him by your righteousness; know you not that He is your righteousness, and that you contemn His righteousness by trying to establish your own? is the power of the scorpion.

4-6. The power given to the locusts was, however, limited. *It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.* The locusts were not permitted to hurt the grass, but only the men which had not the seal of God in their foreheads. The number sealed out of all the tribes of Israel being all of every class of believers in the church who are saved; the unsealed are the unfaithful who are not saved. These were subject to the power of the locusts; for such yield a ready submission to the persuasive power of sensual reasonings. These are the men that could be hurt of the locusts; for by men, we have seen, are to be understood those attributes which constitute humanity, or by which men are distinguished from animals, the faculties of thinking and willing, of understanding truth and loving goodness. These the sensual principles are able to hurt, but are not permitted to destroy. As regards the locusts, it was not given them to kill the unsealed, but to torment them. Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. The sting of the scorpion produces local insensibility, and may even cause death. Mental torment, such as that caused by the scorpion's sting, is the intolerable pain which the mind experiences when the activity of its powers is forcibly restrained; when men know not what to think on subjects in which they are deeply interested, or with which their human feelings and aims are intimately connected.

This power of the locusts was limited in duration as well as in

extent: they were only to torment the victims of their persuasions for five months. This does not mean such a measure of time, but a corresponding measure of state: it means such a diminution of the power of willing and thinking as left them little of real life; for the cessation of this power is death. So great is the torment of deadened or suppressed mental activity, that the total extinction of the power to think and feel seems preferable. Therefore, in those days, that is, during these states, men seek death and desire to die: they seek intellectual death, and desire the death of the will. It is one of the symptoms of an unsound mind, that the poor lunatic seeks death and desires to die. The morbid action of the faculties often tends in this direction; their healthy activity never. And as the suicide cannot destroy life, but finds himself alive; even so the mentally and spiritually diseased, however they may in the torments of mental distraction and hopeless mental effort desire to lose their sense of agony in annihilation, yet they cannot be killed and cannot command death. The human faculties of will and understanding, the power of willing and thinking, however deadened by the poison of other men's reasonings or of their own, can never be destroyed. In these their humanity consists, and they enjoy them by virtue of that indissoluble connection with God which secures their immortality.

7-11. *The shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions: and there were stings in their tails. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.* The horse is a symbol of the understanding, the noble faculty which the Creator has given us for knowing and apprehending His truth. When this understanding is employed in the cause of error, it becomes a reasoning rather than a rational power; for no man is truly rational who sees truth as error, and error as truth. Sensual men are ingenious, though superficial; they have in acuteness what they lack in penetration. They are as eager for intellectual conflict as the war-horse is for battle: they have a confident opinion of their own invincibility; and are ever ready to claim triumph even when they signally fail of success. So the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle, and on their heads were as it were

crowns of gold. Although the sensual are more animal than rational, they deem themselves more than others to be human ; and therefore the locusts had the faces of men and the hair of women. They claim to have the wisdom which is the characteristic of men, and the affection which is characteristic of women—the wisdom of love and the love of wisdom. But with the faces of men, they have the teeth of lions; for they are ever ready to “tear the soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.” With these weapons of offence, they have, as defensive armour, breastplates of iron. The strongest, most abundant, and most useful of metals, iron is the symbol of natural or ultimate truth, such as is contained in the literal sense of the Word. But the literal sense may be turned in defence of error as well as used in support of truth. The apparent truths of the letter of the Word sensual men confirm and use as real truths. Satan can quote Scripture in opposition to the truth: so can every one of his disciples; for Satan is but a name for all who love and defend error by means of perversions of the truth. Although in the shape of horses, these creatures were still locusts; and when they rushed to the combat, the sound of their wings was as the sound of *chariots* of many horses running to battle. Chariots are symbols of doctrine as their wheels are of the reasonings by which progression is made either for conquest or defence. There is an analogy between wheels and wings as means of motion; and hence the comparison of the sound of the locusts’ wings with that of chariots of many horses running to battle.

But notwithstanding their combining in themselves the qualities of strength and beauty, openness and valour, they have one characteristic of the sensual nature which has marked it from the beginning, when the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field. Fair in appearance, and open in profession, the sensual are yet insidious and venomous. Contending for “the faith,” which in their case is faith alone, they envelop the whole subject in the smoke of the bottomless pit; and while they are ingeniously persuasive of the truth of their false faith, they exert their whole power to destroy the truth. False persuasions are powerful by being formed into a system which has harmony and unity. Therefore the locusts did not move and act as a scattered and undivided multitude. They had a king over them. They were under the government of a leading and supreme power. Their king was the angel of the bottomless pit. This pit was the abode of the spirits of those who had lived and died in the doctrine and the life of faith alone. And the angel of the pit was the impersonation of

that faith itself, the destroying angel, faith alone. This faith has been the destroyer, as his name imports, of the truths both of the Hebrew and of the Greek Testaments—both of the Law and the Gospel. Hearing and not doing, professing and not practising, have been the destruction of both the Jewish and the Christian Church.

We turn then to consider the mission of this exceeding great army. When we speak of their mission, we speak according to the language of the prophetic vision; not understanding that their mission was Divine further than it was permitted, and subordinated to providential ends. The will and wisdom of man have an innate tendency opposite to the will and wisdom of God, and would of themselves go on to universal destruction. The Divine power cannot, consistently with man's free will, prevent their activity; but the Divine Providence limits their operations. This limitation is Divine permission. Permission implies therefore, not licence but restraint. Accordingly, “it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree.” These are symbols of the living principles of truth and good that support the spiritual life of man, the green pastures into which the Divine Shepherd leads His flock, the trees planted by the rivers of waters, which yield their fruits in their season. Over these, as they grow in the minds of the faithful, fallacious reasonings and cunning persuasions have no power. For we are to remember that all those wonders are descriptive of states and changes of state in the minds of men, either in the natural or in the spiritual world. There are, indeed, general states and changes of state *among* men; but these are the results of states and changes of state *in* them; so that the external and general always imply a corresponding internal and particular. In these tribulations there are always also two opposite classes involved, the faithful and the unfaithful, the good and the evil. The good and the faithful suffer no injury from them. Tribulation sifts them as wheat; but the wicked are like chaff which the wind driveth away.

As the sounding of the trumpets manifests the character of faith alone, one of the effects of the tenet is seen to be, to impair the faculties of willing and thinking, leaving the mind in a state of inability to think justly and will wisely, and a prey to morbid desires and imaginations. This is one of the woes proclaimed by the flying angel.

12, 15. *One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded; and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in*

the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. Who were these angels that had been bound in the Euphrates, and who were now to be loosed to slay the third part of men? Euphrates was the river that separated Assyria from Canaan. Assyria is a symbol of the rational principle of the mind, and the Euphrates is the rational truth which separates or distinguishes the rational from the spiritual principle of the mind, of which Canaan was the type. Such are Assyria and its river, when Assyria is at peace with Israel. But here they are at enmity: the destroying angels are in their river, bound, indeed, but prepared for their deadly work, and only waiting to be loosed to deal destruction among the inhabitants of the holy land. It is easy to see that this state is one in which reason, instead of being on the side of true religion, is opposed to it, and is destructive of it when that opposition becomes active. The angels come out of the river as the locusts come out of the smoke, as the lightning out of the cloud, the moth out of the chrysalis, the embryo out of the egg, so out of reason comes forth reasoning. Natural reason can only produce natural reasoning. So far as it reasons on the things of nature, it may reason justly; but whenever it essays to reason on spiritual things, it reasons unjustly and falsely; for it reasons not only in the dark, but in darkness which it has gathered around itself, in order to exclude the only light in which men can reason justly on spiritual things. We say it reasons unjustly and falsely; for the natural man is ill-disposed, as well as incompetent, when spiritual matters are the subjects of inquiry or debate. He therefore reasons in favour of evil as well as of error, and therefore against good as well as against truth. So there were four angels, a number which always points to the conjunction of good and truth, or of evil and error. These river-angels had been bound; now they were loosed. Outward restraints bind the natural man, and keep him from reasoning openly against religion, good, and truth. With the professedly religious the angels may remain bound during the whole of one's natural life. Death sets them at liberty, except in those cases in which the wheat and the tares are allowed to grow together in the middle state until the harvest. If not immediately, eventually all the outward bonds which the world had imposed are removed, when the secret thoughts and intents of the heart come into open manifestation. Forced suppression does not extinguish the evil desire and the false thought, but rather encourages and matures them. They are prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.

The evil desire and false thought are constant and prevailing ; they enter into all states of the mind, from the most particular to the most general, from the least to the greatest ; and are thus prepared for the evil work they so willingly and effectually perform. They slay a third part of men. In everything there is a trine. In religion this trine consists of charity, faith, and works ; and if one of these is taken away all perish. Hence in Scripture a third part means the whole. If there is one part more than another which these angels slay, that part must be good works, considered as a condition of salvation. If works are taken away from religion, what remains ? Charity and faith have no actual existence but in works. Without them religion is a house built, not upon the sand, but in the air.

16. But these angels of death have a host at their command. *And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand : and I heard the number of them.* This army resembles, and yet differs from, that which preceded it. The armies resemble each other, because they represent the same false principle ; but they differ, because they seek to effect the same object by somewhat different means. The first army represents the persuasive power ; the second army, the argumentative power. The second army follows, and completes what the first had begun. The power of persuading comes more from the will ; the power of convincing more from the understanding. So the first army comes up out of the abyss, because this signifies the sensual will ; the second army comes from the valley of the Euphrates, because this signifies the rational faculty. The first is an army of locusts, like unto horses, because sensual persuasion is not reasoning, but resembles it ; the second is an army of horsemen upon horses, because horsemen upon horses represent reasoning. The horses of the first army had tails like unto scorpions, because persuasion, like the stroke of the scorpion, benumbs the faculty without destroying it ; so this army had power to hurt men, but not to kill them. The horses of the second army had tails like serpents, because serpents represent sensual wisdom and its reasoning, by which false principles are intellectually confirmed, so that the faculty of understanding truth is destroyed ; therefore this army had power not only to hurt men, but to slay them. When the mind is confirmed in essential error by reasonings, the truth is slain. The subtle reasonings in favour of the error which brings such destructive effects on the human mind are the army of horsemen ; for in the genuine sense a horseman is reason, and the horse which he rides is the understanding. These, which are true with

the true, are false with the false. The number of this army describes its character, as well as its strength ; for numbering means arranging and setting in array, and reasoning requires and implies a knowledge and arrangement of arguments, to refute another's opinion and confirm one's own. They are said to be two hundred thousand thousand, literally, two myriads of myriads. These myriads of myriads are false principles originating in evil, from which they reason, and the two myriads of myriads are expressive of the conjunction of evil and error. They are indeed numerous ; but they are not a mixed multitude, but are numbered and marshalled for the work of destruction. Mental objects are numbered when they are known and ordinated. God telleth the number of the stars. He alone knows and disposes in their beautiful order the truths of His heavenly kingdom in the minds of those He creates anew ; and these truths are the hosts or armies of heaven, that fight in their courses against the enemies of the Lord and His people. The Lord does not number the hosts of His enemies ; yet He knows their number, and gives to His servants to know it ; for those who are in the Lord, and in whom the Lord is, are enabled to know the character of the errors that assail them, and to see how skilfully they are arranged for conquest, as John heard the number of the horsemen.

17. But John not only heard the number of the horsemen, but he *saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.* Hearing and seeing are the complements of each other. How much does each reveal; how much leave unrevealed? They are twin sisters, or rather sister and brother, whose impressions and ideas of things are different and yet related, each supplementing and perfecting the other. Hearing is more the organ and minister of affection, sight is more the organ of thought; and they act and re-act upon each other, each giving and receiving, that the apprehension of a thing may be complete, and their joy may be full. But there is a peculiarity in John's seeing in this instance. He does not say, as he had said before, that he was in the spirit and saw, but that he saw in vision. Although the vision to John was real, its foundation was unreality. The horses and their riders were the creations and emblems of that fantasy in which such false reasonings as this army represents originate. The reasonings of the natural man are but the drawn-out fallacies of the senses, or the ingenious confirmation of the appearances of things, of the phenomenal as opposed to the real.

There is a wide difference in the moral as well as in the intellectual character of reasoning in favour of apparent truth, according as it is in the absence or in the presence of real truth. When there was no other system of astronomy but that of Ptolemy, founded upon the appearances, that the earth is the centre of the system, and that all the heavenly bodies moved round it, the attempt to explain it was not only natural but meritorious. But when the true system of the universe was⁷ discovered or re-discovered, it was then a very different thing to attempt to maintain the old in opposition to the new; for the attempt to prove the false to be true and the true to be false, is an abuse of the human faculties, and a violation of justice and judgment, which are the habitation of the throne of God in every human mind. And so it is in spiritual things. When the apparent truths of the Word are all that men know, any honest attempt to show their consistency and harmony is natural and laudable. But when its real truths are brought to light, and these only excite hostility, and bring the old into conflict with the new, men commit the same fault as those who oppose the apparent to the real in nature. In this attitude stands the natural man. He whose faith lies within the domain of the senses may be enlightened and rational on all subjects that lie within that domain. He may even be eminent as a man of science and learning. Yet one who has penetrated far into the hidden mysteries of nature, may have confirmed himself in the appearances of nature in opposition to the realities of a world higher than nature, or, one might say, within nature, which is but the vesture of spirit. Spirit lies beyond the domain of the senses. It is the life from which nature lives; and as life is nothing without its attributes, life is the love which inspires and the wisdom which directs her, which glow in the sun and blossom in the trees. Because to the eye of sense nature appears to live from the sun, life is supposed to be natural, and sufficient to cause the effects observed. But all the reasonings in support of this theory are from the fallacies of the senses. The vision does not, however, relate to those only who deny Revelation; it extends to those who accept it, but who judge and reason sensually respecting its nature and teaching. It relates especially to those who have confirmed themselves, and desire to confirm others, in the dogma of salvation by faith alone. All these reason from fallacies; for there are fallacies in spiritual as there are in natural things, because there are apparent and there are real truths in Revelation as there are in Nature. Errors in religion arise chiefly from confirming the apparent truths of Scrip-

ture as real truths. So long as the apparent truths of the Word are believed in simplicity, no injury results from believing them. It may be believed that God is angry and vindictive, and will not be satisfied without the punishment of the sinner. When men are such that their fear is stronger than their love of God, such views of the Divine character are beneficial. But when these apparent truths are adopted and confirmed as real truths, and a superstructure of systematic divinity is raised upon them, they become serious errors. And grievous indeed is the error when it is believed that the righteous God, while He demands the death of the sinner, can be satisfied with the blood of the innocent instead of the guilty. It is singular how ingeniously men can reason in favour of this doctrine. The law, they say, demands perfect obedience, or the death of the sinner. But everyone has sinned in Adam, and daily offends in thought, word, and deed. Therefore all men are under condemnation. As all men have sinned, all must have died, and died eternally, had not the Son of God taken their sins upon Himself, and suffered the penalty due to them. Divine justice being satisfied by Christ's sufferings, God can now justly forgive the sinner for Christ's sake. All that He requires is faith, faith in the efficacy of the Saviour's sacrifice. The faithful are indeed required to do good works, but only as fruits and evidences of their faith. Men cannot be saved without works; but works contribute nothing to salvation. By these and many other reasonings, the commandments of God are made of none effect by the traditions of men; and the theoretical exaltation of the moral law has been turned into a means of its debasement. The arguments by which the advocates of this doctrine defend it are the breastplates of fire, and jacinth, and brimstone which the horses had on; and the reasonings they employ in teaching it are the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone that issue out of the horses' mouths. Fire and brimstone, so prominent in all descriptions of the lower world, and of what proceeds from it, are emblems of the two great elements of the life of those who inhabit the regions of eternal woe—the love of what is evil, and the belief of what is false. The fire of hell is not elementary fire, nor is it a fire kindled and kept alive by Divine wrath for eternal punishment. The fire of hell is that which burns in the hearts of the wicked—the fire of self-love, and therefore of hatred to God, and to each other; the opposite, in fact, of the heavenly fire of love to God and the neighbour. That fire burns in the hearts of the wicked while in this world; but it is more or less covered over by the appearance of virtue which, for selfish reasons, they are willing to assume before men; for even

the appearance of virtue has its reward. But besides the fire and brimstone, there is jacinth in the horses' breastplates ; and besides the fire and brimstone, smoke issued out of their mouths. Jacinth, which is cerulean blue, is the symbol of intelligence ; but in the evil it is self-derived intelligence, the offspring of self-love. The smoke that issues with the fire and brimstone out of their mouths, is falsity produced by the fire of evil love. Evil love produces false thoughts ; and both unite in producing injurious teaching and evil deeds. These, be it observed, issued out of the horses' mouths ; evidently indicating the very acts of reasoning and teaching. And as the horses had lions' heads, so do they send out their stream of burning but darkening eloquence from their lions' mouths ; the lion being the emblem of power, whether employed in defending or opposing the truth. The Devil is said to go about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ; but Satan steals upon his victims under false appearances, even assuming that of an angel of light, and reasoning men's souls away even in the very language of the Scriptures. Evil is the Devil, falsity is Satan. And all false reasonings that proceed from evil are diabolic in their origin, and satanic in their nature.

18, 19. As falsity from evil is satanic in its nature, so is it deadly in its effects. *By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails : for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.* Thoughts and reasonings are the things that proceed out of the mouth. With those who are meant by the horses, these burst forth from the love of evil, which is the fire ; from the love of what is false, which is the smoke ; and from the lust of destroying good and truth by falsity and evil, which is the brimstone. “Out of the mouth proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries.” These are the things that defile and destroy. They destroy all that is human, which is meant by the third part of men. A third part, we have seen, means the whole. The prophecy does not, however, mean that all the people were killed, but that all understanding or intellectual perception of truth was destroyed ; for this constitutes humanity, or makes men truly human, or spiritually minded. When the church becomes natural, all its reasonings are from fallacies respecting the meaning and understanding of the Word. This reasoning is the power by which sensual men destroy ; for by reasoning in favour of errors from the literal sense of the Word they are able to justify and excuse evil, not directly but indirectly, making the Scriptures themselves appear

to teach what is opposed to their own essential principles. The power of the mystic horses was in their mouth and in their tail: and while their mouths were those of the lion, their tails were those of the serpent—the union of boldness and subtlety—the boldness of asserting and the subtlety of confirming what is agreeable to the fallen and degenerate nature of man. But the serpents which formed the tails of the horses, had heads. The head of any doctrine is its prominent or essential part, and the tail is that which confirms it. Therefore it is said that “the ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail” (Isa. ix. 15). The mouth of the lion is natural reasoning, and the mouth of the serpent is sensual reasoning. What the lion’s mouth asserts the serpent’s mouth confirms. With them they do hurt; for when the senses confirm what the mind conceives, the principles of truth and righteousness are injured often beyond all remedy.

20, 21. *And the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.* The rest of the men who were not killed are those in whom the understanding of truth is not entirely destroyed, but who yet remain unreformed and unregenerate. The effect of the doctrine of faith alone, even with those whose perceptive faculty retains some of its power, is strikingly manifest here. The men repent not. The conviction that salvation is by faith alone practically annuls the doctrine, and prevents the practice, of true repentance. The necessity and value of repentance consist in this. Evil must be removed that good may be received; and evil can only be removed by sincere repentance. Those who hold the opinion that faith is the only condition of salvation, consistently believe that faith contains everything in itself. An act of faith secures forgiveness and justification. And if sins are forgiven, and the believer is justified, where is the necessity for repentance? It is indeed admitted that after being justified the believer is sanctified, or gradually perfected in holiness. But if the first work remains undone, how is the second to be effected? There is a general and great misapprehension among Christians respecting the nature of forgiveness. Pardon is supposed to be a Divine fiat, like that of an earthly sovereign, remitting the punishments which the law has awarded for some criminal act. In the Divine economy sins are forgiven when they are removed. But what

of past sins? Past sins are forgiven when the sinful inclination which committed them is removed. There is no other way of forgiving sin. Sin once committed cannot be undone; but when the sinful lust is rooted out from the heart, the law is satisfied, because it is obeyed. Evil is removed so far as it is hated and shunned; good is acquired so far as it is loved and practised. But good can only be loved and practised in the degree that evil is hated and shunned. The very beginning of actual religion therefore is repentance. We must, it is true, have as much faith as convinces us of the necessity of repentance. But faith is as much dependent on repentance, as repentance is on faith. They grow and strengthen together. They act and re-act upon each other. Without repentance faith is fruitless. Even when it does good, the good it does is not genuine; for unrepented evils lurk within and defile it. These unrepented evils are the devils which the unregenerate worship; for every one is a worshipper of that which he cherishes in his heart; and devils mean, as personally they are, evil desires. This is the idolatry so much treated of, and so severely condemned, in Scripture. Besides these evil lusts meant by devils, there are idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Natural and worldly men are worshippers of gold and silver, either for their own sake or as the means of commanding other objects of desire. But there are idols of the church as well as of the world, and these consist of the religious doctrines which are the work of men's hands,—for the men of the church devise and elaborate them by their own wisdom from the Scriptures of truth. All religious errors are drawn from the Scriptures, the Scriptures being so interpreted as to make the errors seem to be scriptural. The truths of Scripture are the materials out of which these doctrinal idols are made. Thus, idols of gold are errors of doctrine respecting things Divine and celestial, idols of silver are errors respecting things spiritual, idols of brass are errors respecting charity, idols of stone are errors respecting faith, and idols of wood are errors respecting good works. All the truths of Scripture are living and practical; but when they are shaped into images by the human imagination, they neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. All doctrines which originate with men are destitute of spiritual life, and can impart none to those who trust in them. They are blind, for they give no understanding of truth; they are deaf, for they give no perception of goodness; and they do not walk, for they do not enable man to live a good life. The result, therefore, is that those who worship these lifeless idols

of their own making “repent not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” Murder is the destruction of spiritual life, the essential of which is love to God. Sorceries are perversions of what is good; fornications are falsifications of what is true; and thefts are the depriving others of saving knowledge. Those who are practically in the doctrine of salvation by faith alone do all these evils, and if they confirm themselves in them, they repent not; and not to repent is to perish.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN the seventh seal of the Divine book was opened (viii. 2), seven trumpets were given to seven angels. Six of these trumpets have been sounded; and each successive blast has shaken the earth or the heavens, while hell itself has been let loose to increase the disorder, and help forward the destruction. All these are signs, presented to the Seer in vision, of the progressive disclosure of the states of the church, as manifested in a disclosure of the states of those in the other life who had belonged to it, and who represented its character during the several stages of its declension. One of the seven angels has yet to sound; and his is to be the trumpet of the jubilee, which proclaims the end of the reign of servitude, and the beginning of the reign of liberty. The events, recorded in this and the succeeding chapter, which come between the sounding of the sixth and of the seventh trumpets, are of a different character from those we have considered, and are preparatory to the better state of things which the seventh sound is to introduce.

1. 2. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. The appearance of this angel and the other circumstances which come between the sounding of the sixth and of the seventh trumpets, are similar in their character to those which come between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. Between the opening of these seals, four angels are seen standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds; and another angel ascends from the east, having the seal of God, with which he proceeds to seal twelve thousand out of each of the tribes of Israel.

Between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets, a mighty angel comes down from heaven, with a little book in his hand, which John eats, as a means of enabling him to prophesy to the nations ; and two heavenly witnesses give their testimony to the truth. This feature of the prophecy has its parallel in sacred history. Before the end of the Jewish Church John the Baptist and the Lord appeared, to seal the believing numbers of the church, and to give their testimony to the truth ; and, like the two witnesses, they themselves were slain and taken up into heaven. Before the end of a church preparation is made for the commencement of another ; and this must be effected by some new revelation or manifestation of the truth. What is necessary at the end of a general dispensation, is required at different periods of its declension, when a crisis is at hand. Such was the Nicene Council, that saved the church from falling a prey to Arianism ; and such was the Reformation, which prevented its being totally destroyed by Popish corruption, and which brought out the Book of Holy Scripture from its concealment. All corruption of the church is accompanied by a corruption of the truth as revealed in the Word ; and all restoration of the church is effected through a restoration of the truth which the Word contains. The corruptions of the church are disclosed by the opening of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, the pouring out of the vials. All these are shown to be connected with the book ; and out of the book judgment is finally effected. The book in the hand of the angel is that by which the progress of destruction is arrested, and provision is made for final restoration. The mighty angel himself, who takes his representative character from his function, is a type of the Lord in His character of Divine Truth or the Word. The cloud with which he was clothed is the literal sense of the Word, and the rainbow over his head is its spiritual sense, as it shines in and through the sense of the letter. As no one can gaze upon the sun, no one can look upon the face of God, as it shines in the inmost of His Word ; but when the indwelling light falls upon the cloud of the letter, in its doctrine which drops as the rain and distils as the dew, it is broken into a thousand rays, forming the glorious arch, the sum of celestial beauty and the sign of the covenant of peace. The characteristics of the Word in its inner sense are further described by the aspect of the angel. Like the Lord in the midst of the candlesticks, his face is as the sun and his feet like pillars of fire. The sun is emblematical of the Divine Love and Wisdom, the fountain of spiritual life and light to angels and men. These constitute the inmost of the Word, and

pervade it through every descending degree, even to the lowest, which is represented by the angel's feet, which are like pillars of fire, to express the Divine Love, as it is in the ultimate sense of the Word on which its higher truths rest, as the body on its feet.

The book which the angel held in his hand is the same book that was seen in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne (chap. v.). It was then sealed with seven seals. It is now open, as the Lamb had unclosed it; and the open volume is to be offered to those represented by John, who are prepared to receive it. While the book is the same as that first seen by John, there is the difference of its being a little book; for the Word as to one of its truths, not the whole Word, is now treated of. That one truth is—THE SOLE DIVINITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE DIVINITY OF HIS HUMANITY. These are two, and yet they are one, for they form together the essential and central truth of the Word, and doctrine of the Church. This truth is the little book which is an epitome of the great book; and this truth men must receive, and inwardly digest, before the church can be truly the Lord's mystical body.

The glorious being who descended from heaven with the open book in his hand, that men might again read therein the truth that had been sealed up and hidden from their sight, stood with his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth. As heaven is God's throne, and the earth is His footstool, this act of the angel is a sign that the whole church is under the Lord's auspices and dominion, the earth, in the spiritual sense, being the church. When the sea is also mentioned, the earth, as the land, means the internal of the church, and the sea its external.

But why should the angel set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth? The right has relation to goodness, and the left to truth. The angel therefore set his right foot upon the sea, to indicate that in the minds of the simple who formed the external of the church, there was a foundation on which the Lord's goodness could rest; and he set his left foot on the earth, to indicate that in the minds of the wise who formed the internal of the church, there was a foundation only for His truth.

But the church here represented was neither in goodness nor in truth. In the church, even in its worst state, there are still some remains of goodness and truth preserved in the minds of some of its members, and on these the Lord is able to place His feet, and exercise His dominion.

3, 4. When the angel had thus set his right foot on the sea and his

left on the earth, he *cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth : and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.* The cry uttered by the angel was an expression of anguish as well as of power, like that of a lion bereaved of her whelps or robbed of her prey, but roused to energy to seek their recovery. The cry was especially expressive of love, which is meant by its being called a loud or great voice. The condition of the church to which this vision relates is like that described in Joel, when the harvest was ripe for the sickle of judgment, “The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem ; and the heavens and the earth shall shake : but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel ” (iii. 16). The cry of the angel is the voice of love lamenting over the shattered state of the church, but it is at the same time the promise of its restoration by the power of truth. “The lion hath roared, who will not fear ? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy ? ” (Amos iii. 8). When the angel uttered his cry, seven thunders uttered their voices. We have seen (iv. 5) that thunder and lightning proceeding out of the throne mean Divine Truth from the Lord through heaven. The seven thunders that uttered their voices in answer to, and in symphony with, the voice of the angel was the response of heaven to the cry of Divine Love on the desolate state of the church. Seven is a holy number, and one that also expresses completeness or perfection. This thundering was of the nature of a revelation, for revelation comes through heaven. The Divine Truth in heaven is that through which Divine Love makes itself known in the church among men. But this revelation was not yet to be made known ; for John says, *When the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.* A similar command was given to Daniel, when he had seen a vision, and heard the interpretation, “Shut thou up the vision ; for it shall be for many days ” (viii. 26). The command to seal up the things which the seven thunders had uttered, and write them not, means that the truths which these thunders denote must not be divulged, because they could not yet be received, that is, they could not yet be written in the book of men’s minds and lives. John, indeed, says he was about to write ; for those whom John represented could understand, and were willing to receive and communicate, but even they could not now with certainty and safety, for John had not yet eaten the little book, nor tasted its sweetness and its bitterness. Others could not until the dragon was cast out.

5, 6. When this command had been given, John says, *the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.* A passage similar to this occurs in Daniel: "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (xii. 17). The man clothed in linen, whose "body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude" (x. 6), was, like the "mighty angel," a representative of the Lord Himself, as the Word, or Divine Truth. Indeed, the vision in which Daniel saw this man, is so like that in which John saw the Son of man (i. 13-15), and this in which he saw the angel, that it evidently refers to the same subject, the appearance of the Lord in His Humanity; and therefore, unlike the other visions of God mentioned in the Old Testament, the body itself of this man is said to be like the beryl. The Lord had come down from heaven, and planted His feet on the earth and the sea, as a sign of His universal dominion; and He now lifts up His hand, as the emblem of His power, and swears that there should be time no longer. The Divine Being can only swear by Himself: and He alone can swear in the proper sense of the term, for He is the Faithful and True Witness; He is the Truth, whose word is sure and unalterable. The angel, it is true, swears by another, but that other is the Lord Himself as Divine Love, who, from His Love, which is Life, not only created the visible heaven and the habitable earth, but gave existence to the heaven of angels and the church among men; for heaven and the church were the purpose of the visible creation, and for this reason they are always meant, in the spiritual sense, when the creation is spoken of in Scripture. As the church and not the world is the subject of the apocalyptic vision, time is to be understood in reference to the church, and not to the world. The church on earth has indeed some relation to time. It has its history; but its history is the record of its states and changes of state. Time, therefore, means state. The church had passed through many changes of state; but it was now hastening to its close, when the state itself of love and faith, which

constitute the church, should be no more. Time even in nature is the succession of states. Day and night, summer and winter—the succession of these makes time. Were the alternations of these to cease, there would be no longer time. So the corresponding alternations of spiritual day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, produce states as the condition of spiritual life. When these cease, there is for the inner world no longer time. It is night and it is winter: darkness and death reign. The end of time has therefore no reference to the end of the world, but to the end of the church.

7. But in extremity there is hope. *In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.* When the seventh angel sounded (xi. 15.) there were great voices out of heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.” These are the glad tidings which the prophet had received. All the prophets testify of a time when the Lord shall be King over all the earth. That is the time of the Lord’s Second Advent, which is the mystery of God that should be finished, when judgment, which is the Lord’s “strange work,” should have removed the obstacles to that blessed consummation. The little book is, we have seen, the Word of God, with especial reference to its great truth, that Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity is the only God of heaven and earth. This central truth of the Gospel, for ages lost, was now to be restored, and made more manifest than ever before, which is indicated by the book being open. The book was presented to John to show, by the effects of his eating it, how the doctrine of the Word respecting the Lord would at the time of the end be received. The essential principles of a new dispensation are always made known before the old has passed away; for the rudiment of the new is to be formed from the remnant of the old. This remnant is here represented by John. Those who are principled in love or charity, which John represents, are the first recipients of the new faith. These are meant by the beloved apostle in what the Lord said respecting him to Peter, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me” (John xxi. 22). Jesus thus symbolically taught, that although faith would die out in the church, charity would survive till the time of His Second Coming. And by those who were then in a state of charity the principles of the Church of His Second Advent would be first received. Their reception of the newly-revealed principles is

representatively described by John eating the little book, and the state of their reception by the sense of sweet and bitter which it produced. As this subject applies to those whom John represented, and describes, to some extent, the experience of all who accept the true doctrine of the Lord, it will be useful to consider it in its individual application.

8-11. John heard a voice from heaven, saying, *Go and take the little book out of the hand of the angel.* Those who are in a receptive state, and desire to know the truth, are led by an inward dictate to go to the Lord, who alone can reveal it to them. But the Lord does not teach men immediately from Himself, but mediately through His Word. He holds the open book in His hand. He invites them, as the heavenly voice invited John, to take the book and eat it; but they must, like John, freely go and take that which is freely offered. The Lord has all power; but His power works effectually only in the willing and obedient. He calls, entreats, commands, but does not compel. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isa. iv. 1, 2). Eating the book is an obvious and expressive symbol of receiving into the mind what the book contains. But the difference is here pointed out between taking the book into the mouth and receiving it into the belly. In the mouth it is sweet; in the belly it is bitter. The mouth corresponds to the thought; the belly to the will. A truth that is easily received into the thought may find difficult admission into the will. How sweet is it to think of the Lord as the Saviour and Redeemer! how difficult to accept Him in truth and in deed as our Saviour from sin! Not difficult for those who have only to believe that Christ died in their stead, and by that belief are justified from all their sins; but difficult for those who come to know that Jesus saves, not by delivering them from the legal consequences of sin, but from sin itself; that as Jesus Himself was perfected through sufferings, so must His disciples; that as He glorified His Humanity and made it Divine by conflict with evil and hell, so must those who follow Him be regenerated and made heavenly by conquering the evils of their heart and life. Here is the bitterness of the greatest and most precious truth that the Gospel reveals. This is the Gospel. But the bitterness attending its inward and practical

realization is greater with those who first receive it at the end of the dispensation ; for then there is a conflict first of all between the faith of the old and that of the new. A system of error has been gradually built up ; and the truths of the Gospel have been shaped by the skill of men, who have lifted their tool upon them (Exod. xx. 25), to fit them for the place they are to occupy in it. In these circumstances the recipient of the truth has to free himself from the entanglements of error ; and has to resist both the inward and outward influences by which it is supported. It is these that increase the severity of the inward conflict. But when the conflict is ended, how great is the peace which is secured ! To know Jesus as Jehovah in the holy temple of His Divine Humanity, is to possess a truth of inestimable value and irresistible power. This also enables the disciple, like the prophet, to receive and execute the Divine commission. *Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.* In regard to the New Dispensation, to which this historically applies, the truth is to be proclaimed and taught anew to all nations and all conditions of men. But there is a specific meaning in the names of the different bodies and classes to whom John was to prophesy. Nations and peoples are, spiritually, those who are principled in good and truth, or are disposed to accept them when taught from the Word, and tongues and kings are those who are in the knowledge and perception of these principles which the Word teaches. The Word offers its truths and promises to all men, but only those who are well disposed, and who turn their thoughts heavenward, receive its teaching. To such, therefore, John has further to prophesy, or to teach the truth respecting the Lord and His new kingdom. In regard to the Christian disciple, these peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings are the affections and thoughts of his own mind. But as those whom John was to address were Gentiles, they denote the affections and thoughts of the natural mind, which are to be brought under the influence of the principles that now reign in the inner man. The great world of humanity has its origin in the individual man ; and here is to begin and thence is to proceed every beneficial change in the state and condition of the race.

CHAPTER XI.

1, 2. WHEN John had eaten the book, and had received the commission to prophesy again, he was commanded to perform another duty, which, though it has no obvious, has yet an intimate connection with his previous act. *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.* Having, as the prophet of the New Dispensation, received its principles and a commission to teach them, he is now prepared, as he is commanded, to examine and form a just estimate of the state of the church. This is meant by applying to it the measure of the sanctuary. The Jewish temple was a type, first of the Lord's own body; secondly, of His mystical body, the church; and thirdly of the individual Christian, as a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's mystical body, the church, is that which John is here commanded to measure. In its widest sense, the Lord's mystical body includes both the church in heaven and the church on earth. And when it does so, the church in heaven is meant by the temple, and the church on earth by the court. This is their meaning here. But was John to measure the whole angelic heaven, as constituting the church universal above? That whose quality was to be ascertained was the new Christian heaven, or, we may say, those of whom the new heaven was being formed. And when we add that to measure means not merely to estimate but also to arrange, so as to bring into just order, we can see that this sacred measuring has reference to the Divine work which was in progress at the time to which this part of the prophecy relates; because the Lord was then preparing all things, both in the spiritual and in the natural world, for the formation of a New Church in heaven, preparatory to the establishment of a New Church on earth. The New Church in heaven, or the New Heaven, was to be formed of those who had belonged to the Christian Church on earth. These were yet in the middle state, and consisted of, or at least included, the twelve tribes of Israel, who had been sealed, and the great multitude which no man could number. These formed the temple which John was commanded to measure, which is indeed evident from the relation itself; for it was the temple of God that was opened in heaven, as mentioned in the last verse of this chapter. A similar instance of measuring the temple is mentioned in

Ezekiel, where (chap. xl.) he describes the man with the measuring reed taking the dimensions of the temple, the altar, and the court, which, like John, he saw in vision. And he was commanded to show the house of Israel the house, that they might be ashamed of their iniquities, to let them measure the pattern ; the meaning evidently being to show the people their iniquities by comparing their state with that of the true church of the Lord, as expressed by its measure. Zechariah also beheld a man with a measuring line, who was going to measure Jerusalem, to see what was the breadth thereof and what was the length thereof. And John afterwards measured the length, breadth, and height of the New Jerusalem. The measure of the church is the measure of her love and faith, and thence of her works. And the measure of these is the sum of their quality and of their relation to each other, rather than of their amount.

The instrument which John received for measuring the temple is not without its meaning. It was a reed like unto a rod. It combined as it were the nature of both. As a reed it measured the church in regard to the quality of its faith, as a rod it measured the church in regard to the quality of its love. The reed also is a symbol of feeble and unsteady faith, the rod of powerful love. When the prophet would describe the Divine tenderness towards those whose faith and love are faint and weak, he represents it as that of one who does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. And when the Lord would describe the wavering faith of the people in John the Baptist, He asks them, "What went ye out in the wilderness to see ? a reed shaken with the wind ?" But a rod as the symbol of power is that which goes out of Zion, the rod that comforts His people in their deepest affliction and their severest trials. The reed like a rod, with which John measured the church, was no other than the standard of truth and goodness contained in the Word in its doctrines of faith and love. For, as we have remarked, John had eaten the book in which that standard is delivered, the little book being itself the doctrines of love and faith, and therefore the test of the state of the church with regard to them. That the temple was to be measured, implies that the church which it represented possessed the qualities which constitute the church, when it is a church indeed. But the prophet was commanded not to measure the court without ; and this command implies that the church on earth, which the court represented, had no measure, had no true doctrine, no love and faith, to estimate and declare. For the new temple had not yet come down to the earth, and the old had ceased to have any of the heavenly qualities of true love or of true faith.

“The court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not.” And the reason is, “it is given to the Gentiles.” It has ceased to be Christian, and become heathen; its members are no longer children of God, but children of the world. For the term Gentile has two meanings; it means those who are without the church, and those who are hostile to it. The Gentile character, as hostile to the church, is that which is here intended. The Gentile principle, thus hostile to the church, is natural evil, as opposed to spiritual goodness, not merely error, as opposed to truth, for the Gentiles are rather in ignorance of the truth than hostile to it. There are, however, Gentiles within the church, and these are the Gentiles to whom the desolated church is given; but even they are influenced by evil more than by error. The Gentiles who obtain possession of the court of the temple tread under foot the holy city. The city of Jerusalem, which is meant by the holy city, is the church, but the church in regard to her doctrines. And the doctrines of the church are holy, for they all inculcate love to God and charity to man. When it is declared that the Gentiles shall tread the holy city under foot, the meaning is, that at the end of the church the holy doctrines of love and charity are trampled upon by the self-love and self-interest, by the appetites and passions of men. Religion is trampled under foot when spiritual things are, in estimation and practice, subordinated to natural things, when the heavenly is subject to the earthly, the eternal to the temporal. The foot signifies what is natural, which, when it obtains the ascendancy, treads on everything spiritual and Divine. There was a time, too, assigned to the continuance of Gentile dominion and misrule. It was to continue “forty and two months.” This number occurs in more than one form in this book. In all cases it resolves itself into three and a half—forty-two months are three years and a half; and here, as in all other cases, it means an end and a beginning. Three means a completed period, the end of a state, the close of a dispensation; and when a half is added, the half means a new beginning. Three and a half, therefore, mean the end of the old and the beginning of the new.

3, 4. When a New Church has been formed in heaven, means must be provided for its commencement upon earth. Spiritual light comes from God through heaven, as natural light comes from the sun through the atmosphere. But natural light must have objects to receive and reflect it, that it may produce effects. So must spiritual light. The objects that receive spiritual light are knowledges. Every new dispensation is, therefore, brought in by a new revelation; and a new revelation requires a new revelator. Such was Moses, such was John

the Baptist, such was John the revelator, and such was Swedenborg. There is this difference between the last and all preceding messengers to the churches. All the others contributed to the sum of that Divine Revelation which we possess in its completeness in the Word of God; he added nothing to the Word, but opened and explained it. The Lord gave His Word through the prophets and apostles; He has given the interpretation through His latest servant, who is rather an expositor than a revelator; or if a revelator, the revealer of secrets which Revelation itself contains. Through him God has communicated the knowledge of the true doctrines of the Word, which had been lost, or had become so misunderstood, as to have no longer their original meaning, and therefore no longer their original power.

Two great doctrines or principles of the Word now opened are represented by the two witnesses, and the promulgation of these principles is meant by their prophesying. We must therefore turn our attention to these two heavenly memorialists. It will we think appear, from an attentive examination of the Divine record, in connection with a similar passage in one of the prophets, that the two witnesses are the personifications of two principles or graces proceeding from God, and testifying of Him and His kingdom to the church on earth. "*These (two witnesses) are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*" This distinct reference to a vision of the prophet Zechariah greatly assists us in fixing on the true sense of the symbolism of this part of the Revelation. It is recorded in the fourth chapter of that prophet that he beheld a candlestick all of gold, and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side, and the other upon the left. The angel that talked with him explained this vision by saying, "This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The two olive-trees are further declared by the angel to be the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth. At the time this vision was granted to the prophet, Zerubbabel, at the head of some of the Jews who had returned from Babylon, was engaged, under great hindrances and discouragements, in rebuilding the city and temple of Jerusalem; and the vision was intended as an assurance that the Lord's Spirit was present to support and protect him in the holy undertaking. The Spirit of the Lord is the Spirit of His love and wisdom,—of His love to warm the heart, of His wisdom to enlighten the understanding. Under the Jewish Dispensation these were symbolized by the olive-tree with its oil, and by the candlestick with its lamps. This oil, so much used also for anointing, sym-

bolized the holy principle of love, from which all sanctification is derived. In the highest sense the holy oil was a symbol of the Divine Love itself; and it was used for inaugurating into their holy office those who were to represent the Lord who was to come into the world, and was called the Messiah, or the Anointed, as being the Holy One, whose very essence was Divine Love. It is written of Him, "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows," and in the Gospel it is declared that God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him. But it was not, strictly speaking, the Divine but the Human nature of the Lord that was the Anointed of Jehovah. Giving and receiving are to be understood, in relation to the Lord, as said of the Divine and the Human. When the Lord declared, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth," He did not assert that this power had been imparted to His Divinity, since this must have always possessed it, but that His Humanity had, by glorification, become possessed of all power; and that which has all power is Divine. The Divinity of the Lord's Humanity is one of the great truths taught and witnessed by the Word of God. It is the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of all prophecy. That Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old, is the first great truth of Christianity, and is itself one of the two witnesses. This is the testimony of the Word respecting the Lord. The other witness, is the testimony of the Word respecting man; "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." These two doctrines of Scripture are the same as the two great commandments, of love to God and love to man, upon which hang all the law and the prophets. There is no faith in the Lord without love to Him, and there is no obedience to His commandments without love to the neighbour. Yet these two essentials of the religion of Christ have been rendered of none effect by the tradition on which the Church of the Reformation especially is built. That tradition is, that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, a distinct person of the Godhead, came into the world to suffer the penalty of human transgression, and that those are accepted who believe that they are saved by His death and righteousness: that is, not by anything they themselves may do, but solely for what Christ has done. Instead of belief in Christ, the church inculcates belief in something which Christ is supposed to have done, but which He never did; and instead of a righteousness to be wrought in the believer by the Spirit of Christ, the church teaches a righteousness to be counted to the believer by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Both are impossibilities. It was impossible that

Christ's death could be substituted for man's death, and it is impossible that the righteousness of Christ, which is infinite, can be imputed to any finite being. In other words, it was impossible that man's sin could be imputed to Christ, and it is impossible that Christ's righteousness can be imputed to man. Faith in what is impossible is not faith in the scriptural sense and definition. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." A faith in what is not, is not faith. True faith is something more than the belief that a thing is true; but belief in what is not true is not true faith. It may be sincere; in which case it is the sincerity and not the faith that saves. It is in the church where this faith is held that the two witnesses appear in order to prophesy. Here, indeed, their teaching is needed, but here also their testimony is little likely to be received. As preachers of the truth amidst prevailing error, they come on their mission clothed in sackcloth. They lament over the lifeless forms of charity and faith, whose vitality alone can make a living church. But their clothing has more than a general significance; it has a special meaning in relation to the state of the church to which they come to prophesy. Garments are emblematical of truths. Truths preserve the vital heat of the soul, which is love, as garments do that of the body. In Scripture clothing is spoken of as righteousness; but righteousness is truth reduced to practice; for truth is nothing if not practical. All truth is practical, and all practice is according to truth. If error is mixed with truth, practice is faulty; if truth is supplanted by error, practice is wrong, because wrongly directed. When we recognize in the two witnesses the two great doctrines of Revelation, which are the two great principles of religion,—love to God and love to man,—we can see a singular propriety in their appearing in sackcloth, when they come to prophesy to a church in which these two essentials of religion are ignored as saving graces, and all their power is transferred to the single grace of faith.

But it may be asked, why these two witnesses should be sent to offer their testimony to the church at this juncture? why they should be sent to prophesy to those who had already rejected them, and who were determined not to receive their testimony, but to kill them and cast them out as accursed? It is the invariable order of Divine Providence, when one dispensation of the church is about to end and another to begin, to reveal the new truth to the old dispensation; since, as we have said, the rudiment of the new is to be formed from the remnant of the old. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the last generation of the Adamic church. But we have still more striking

instances in the case of John the Baptist, and also of the Lord Jesus. They appeared in the last stage of the expiring Jewish church, to preach the great doctrines of truth to a corrupt and unbelieving generation, and they, like the two witnesses, were put to death by those to whom they offered their testimony as the means of life. It is in harmony with this wise and beneficent law of Providence that the doctrines of the New Church, the New Jerusalem, should be promulgated before the end of that which it was to succeed ; so that the teaching of the two witnesses might bridge over the otherwise impassable gulf between the old and the new. This is, indeed, expressed in the statement itself, that they should prophesy a thousand, two hundred, and three-score days. These, like forty-two months, make three years and a half, which, as already shown, mean an end and a beginning.

5, 6. The description which now comes shows that these witnesses are prophesying in the midst of those who are hostile to their teaching. For the Revelator goes on to say, *And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies ; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.* This power to punish their enemies, like the retributive power of God, whose ambassadors the witnesses were, is to be understood not in the absolute but in its relative sense. God does not punish or withhold His blessings from those who are against Him. He is, indeed, represented in the Word as doing so; but this is in the literal sense, which generally describes things according to the appearance. The real truth is, that evil slays the wicked (Ps. xxxiv. 21), and that the sins of men withhold good things from them (Jer. v. 25). God can no more withhold His love and truth from men than the sun can withhold its heat and light. Punishment and suffering do not come from God, or from anything that is of God, but from the evil that opposes itself to His goodness, and the unbelief that shuts out the light of His truth. All that is of God has only the power to bless, not to curse. So of the two witnesses. Love to the Lord and love to man, which are the two witnesses, have in their nature nothing retributive or destructive. Yet punishment does come upon those who hurt them. It seems as if they inflicted it, because where good ends evil begins, and where the blessing ends the curse begins.

The nature of the punishment is expressed by the calamities which the witnesses are said to inflict. There are two kinds of opposition to

the principles of religion, which bring upon the offenders two kinds of retribution. There is opposition of the will and opposition of the understanding. Opposition of the will is against the good of religion, opposition of the understanding is against the truth of religion. Opposition is meant in the text by hurting the witnesses, and both kinds of opposition are meant by hurting them and doing them harm. That which is here spoken is not necessarily open hostility, for not the act but the will to injure them is expressed, “If any man *will*, or *desires*, to hurt them.” In the Church, even in a degraded state, outward and verbal reverence for the principles of religion is often, and indeed generally professed, when yet opposition exists. Outward and open hostility ultimately follows secret dislike. This, as we shall see, was the case in the present instance, and is meant by the beast making war against them and killing them. The two kinds of opposition are mentioned. One is meant by desiring to hurt the witnesses, and the other by desiring to do them harm. The desire to hurt them brings fire out of their mouth and consumes their enemies, and the desire to do them harm brings back upon their enemies the harm they desired to inflict. The fire that comes out of their mouth is the unhallowed fire of self-love, which is opposed to the holy fire of love to God. It is said to come out of the mouth of the witnesses, as consuming fire is said to come from God, because the evil turn the love of God into its opposite, which is the love of self. It is thus only that God is a consuming fire, and that with the breath of His lips He slays the wicked. The same Divine breath that animates the righteous slays the wicked, because the righteous receive it, but the wicked reject it; and this causes life and joy to the one, and death and misery to the other. According to the spiritual law of retaliation, the return of injury on him who desires to inflict it is, that evil returns upon those who intend it. This is a law that is invariable in its action in spiritual states and in the spiritual world; for spiritual laws are as unvarying in the spiritual world, as natural laws are in the natural world. And as we, as to our spirits, are inhabitants of the spiritual world, even while we live in this, our spirits are subject to its laws, as much as our bodies are to the laws of nature. Moral laws, as a lower form of spiritual laws, are, no doubt, as constant as the higher, but in this world their effects are not so observable. The law of retaliation, as taught both by Moses and the Lord, had its origin in the Divine law, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt. vii. 12). This law, which in heaven and among the righteous secures the return of

good for good, becomes among the evil, especially in the other world, the return of evil for evil. He, therefore, who desires to do harm to the two witnesses must in like manner be killed. As thou hast done to them, so shall it be done to thee.

But the power of the witnesses was not limited to breathing fire upon their enemies ; they could also shut heaven, so that there should be no rain in the days of their prophecy ; and the water they could turn into blood. Fire and water are the emblems of love and truth. The rain that descends from heaven to refresh and fructify the earth, is a beautiful symbol of the truth that comes down from heaven to refresh and fructify the mind. But for the constant descent of Divine Truth, the soul would be as parched and desolate as the earth when there is no rain. This influx is as essential to the evil as to the good ; without it the human faculties themselves would cease to act. Without it the thorn and the thistle could no more grow than the lily and the rose. And unless the mind had the faculty and the means of producing the false, useless, and injurious, it could not retain the power of producing the useful and beneficent. And yet what we call so are not entirely useless or hurtful. The thorn and thistle that grow so abundantly on poor and uncultivated soils, go to relieve that very poverty on which they live. Their death is the means of life. Their decayed substance goes to increase the vegetable soil from which higher and better forms of vegetable life may spring, or, being sown or planted, may grow. Divine Truth is the rain which our heavenly Father sendeth on the just and on the unjust, as Divine Love is the sun which He maketh to rise on the evil and on the good. But even the descent of truth is liable to be interrupted. Heaven may be shut, so that there be no rain. But what is the heaven that is shut ? and who shuts it ? We need not say that the witnesses do not. Their prophesying may, however, be said to be the occasion of the calamity ; for they provoke the opposition which produces the act that is ascribed to them. In the general sense, the heaven of angels, through which the truth descends from God to the church on earth, is that which is shut. When the church becomes corrupt, and the intermediate state is largely occupied by the souls of the evil, the Divine influence that comes through heaven is intercepted ; and thus heaven is shut, so that it cannot rain righteousness on the church below. There is another heaven that may be shut. The spiritual mind of man may be closed, so that no heavenly influence can descend into his natural mind and make it fruitful of goodness. All heavenly influences come first into the spiritual mind, and

flow thence into the natural mind. All infernal influences come into the natural mind ; and although they cannot ascend into the spiritual mind, for the same reason that evil cannot enter heaven, yet they can close it, so that nothing heavenly can descend out of or through it from the Lord.

When the inflowing truth is thus intercepted in its course, the natural mind, like the earth when unblest with the dew and rain of heaven, is unrefreshed and unfruitful. Strictly speaking, that which descends from heaven into the mind, is the Spirit of truth. Truth as knowledge is derived from the written Word. This truth is meant by the water that is turned into blood. For when the Spirit of truth is not received into the mind, the spirit of error which is there turns the truth of God's Word into falsity. When the Spirit of truth is shut out, and the truths of the Word are falsified, the natural mind, besides being unfruitful in goodness, becomes afflicted with evils and falsities of all kinds; and these are the plagues with which the earth is smitten. The witnesses are said to inflict these plagues as often as they will; yet, like the other calamities, they result from their will being opposed.

7. But the witnesses who had power to destroy their enemies, and to smite the earth with all plagues, were themselves to be smitten, even to death, by another and still more powerful enemy. *And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.* The finishing of their testimony does not mean the time but the state, which brought their testimony to a close. In its general sense, the witnesses finish their testimony when the church comes to its end. In its particular sense, the witnesses finish their testimony when the heaven of the inner man is shut, and the natural man has turned the truths of the Word into falsity and its good into evil. It is then that the bitterest hatred is excited, and the most active and deadly hostility begins. The beast ascends out of the bottomless pit. Hitherto the witnesses had to cope with the powers of the earth ; now they are to be assailed by the power of hell. Hitherto they had to encounter opposition from earthly loves ; now they are to be opposed by infernal loves. When heaven is shut, hell is opened ; and the destroying angel in some shape ascends out of the abyss. The destroying angel assumes in this instance the form of a beast. He is spoken of as the beast, as if he had previously appeared, although he has not been hitherto mentioned under that name. He is the same as the locusts, or their king, under another form. He is

faith alone under another shape. Rather, the beast represents another form of argument by which that principle is maintained and defended in opposition to the truth.

Some of the arguments in support of this doctrine we have already considered ; we may here advert to some others. To show that salvation is by faith only, it must be made to appear that Jesus Christ has done all for man that man ever was or will be required to do for himself. The Saviour having done all, man has nothing to do ; he has only to believe in the all-sufficiency of the merit of Christ. But salvation by faith alone, though it may be briefly stated, is far from being a simple doctrine. It rests upon a complicated system of theology and scheme of redemption. At the very foundation of the system there must be three distinct persons in the Godhead ; and much has been written to make it appear that three Persons make but one God. The first person of the Trinity demands satisfaction for man's sins ; the second person makes satisfaction ; and the third conveys its benefits to the souls of the redeemed. The reasonings by which this scheme of salvation is sought to be confirmed and explained, are ingenious, though far from being sound. The law of God, it is argued, is so perfect that it demands perfect obedience or the death of the sinner. The justice of God is so inflexible that no offence against it can be forgiven without complete satisfaction. But the sinner himself—and all men have sinned—cannot make this satisfaction. For assuming in theory, what is impossible in fact, that a justified sinner should ever afterwards continue in a life of perfect obedience, he could make no reparation for the sins that are past, which of themselves are sufficient to condemn him. But besides his past sins, every one daily breaks the commandments in thought, word, and deed. And, according to the Westminster Catechism, every sin deserves God's wrath and curse and the pains of hell for ever. By such reasonings do men attempt to show that there must have been some one who had no sin of his own, upon whom the sins of mankind, past, present, and future, might be laid, and in whom they could be punished. Such a one could be found only in the Son of God, who assumed man's nature, and suffered all that the broken law and offended justice of God required. Yet, though the full penalty of sin has been made, pardon and salvation are not unconditional. No one can add anything to the perfect righteousness of Christ, therefore works form no part of the conditions of salvation. There is but one condition on which the sentence of eternal death can be cancelled and eternal life obtained, and that is, faith in Jesus Christ, as the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. It would

be tedious to examine all these points of doctrine, with a view to show how inconsistent they are with Scripture and reason. The fact is, the whole system is founded on error. It is based on a misapprehension both of the nature of God and the nature of man ; of the nature of sin and righteousness, of justice and forgiveness, of justification and salvation ; and even upon a misapprehension of the nature of faith, by which the benefits of redemption are said to be secured.

God is love. Love is His very nature. All His attributes are the attributes of love. Creation was a work of love. Man was its highest object, and his happiness is its highest end. Much is said about creation being designed for God's glory. God is glorified when man is beatified. All that God has ever done, and all that He will ever do, by creation or redemption, by providence or grace, has this and this only for its end. His justice no less than His mercy pursues it. His very laws were ordained for human happiness. God's purpose in all that He does is to make man a moral image of Himself. Only by being "a partaker of the Divine nature" can man be a partaker of the Divine blessedness. How can this be effected, or in any way advanced, by substituted suffering and imputed righteousness? These, like most parts of the scheme of redemption, place the work outside of man rather than within him. It is true that the Lord effected redemption *for* man, but it is no less true that He accomplished it *in* him and *by* him. The Lord effected redemption *in* and *by* man's nature. It is this which makes it a work so perfectly adapted to the nature and to the necessities of man. That which the Lord effected in man's nature was the very work which was required for man's deliverance from sin and his establishment in righteousness. The Lord's work in the flesh consisted of two parts—the subjugation of the powers of darkness, and the glorification of His human nature. The Lord's glorification was the perfect archetype of our regeneration. It was that very work which was needed to redeem man from the effects of the fall, and renew him again into the image and likeness of God. The Lord's holy and beneficent life, His trials and temptations, His sufferings and death, were the means by which His Humanity was perfected. His terrible experiences were not Divinity-inflicted punishments for man's sins,—an idea as monstrous as it is erroneous,—but the effects of His conflicts with the powers of evil. The Humanity which He glorified, and in which He now dwells, is the origin and the pattern of our regeneration. It is because He was glorified that we can be regenerated. Our work is an effect and an image of His. When we overcome, we sit down with Him in His throne ; as He overcame,

and sat down with His Father on His throne. The Lord's work in the flesh was the great work of Atonement—atonement in its true sense of reconciliation. He thereby reconciled the human nature to the Divine in His own person, that He might, through a corresponding work, reconcile us to Himself. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5, 19). "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. v. 10, 11). Faith is a condition of our receiving the benefits of the Lord's Divine work. It is so, not because God will not grant us His salvation, but because, without faith, we cannot and will not receive it. But salvation is not obtained by faith alone. St. Paul, it is true, declares that "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. ii. 16); but he is there speaking of the ceremonial, not of the moral, law. How could he, when a greater than Paul had said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix. 17).

The doctrine of salvation by faith—alone was a reaction from the practical doctrine of the Romish Church of salvation by works alone. Works had been turned into a means of ecclesiastical aggrandizement. Works had been declared to be meritorious; and after one had, out of the superabundance of his good deeds, purchased heaven for himself, he might give the rest for the benefit of some suffering soul in purgatory. But the corruption of a doctrine does not justify its rejection. A true reformation of this gross abuse would have been to restore good works to their true place in the Christian economy. This was more than the deplorable condition of the church had left even the best of her sons either the theological capacity or the moral power of doing. In the history of human opinion we find that one extreme commonly begets another. So the reaction from the Popish corruption of the saving power of good works, was altogether to reject them as conditions of salvation, and ascribe this to faith alone. Another standard was thus raised, around which men might rally, and under which they could find deliverance from the heavy burdens which the church had laid upon them, while she herself would not touch them with one of her fingers. One noble work the Reformation accomplished. It placed the Word of God in the hands of the people, and restored the right of private judgment. These great blessings prepared the way for the Second Coming of the Lord, which was to be effected through the Word, by restoring its true literal meaning, and unfolding its

spiritual sense. These constitute the Coming of the Lord, and are the only means for re-establishing the church upon its true foundations.

It is natural to suppose that a revelation of the truth on these great subjects would excite the hostility of those who had confirmed themselves in the most grossly natural views of the nature and purpose of the Lord's Coming. Especially was opposition to be expected to a true interpretation and exposition of the Word on those doctrines of the Christian religion that intimately concern the salvation of the human soul. When the two witnesses stood up to teach the absolute unity of the Godhead, as dwelling in the single person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the absolute necessity of a life according to the commandments, no wonder they should be opposed by the men of a church, whose whole theology rested on the doctrines of a Tri-personal God and salvation by faith alone. These doctrines are represented by the beast that came out of the abyss. Beasts are, however, not so much the emblems of opinions as of passions, not so much of thoughts as of affections. And when these are enlisted on the side of error, they must be enraged against the truth, as threatening to deprive them of their dominion. The passions that are excited into hostility by the teaching of the truth, have their origin in the unregenerate heart, which is the abyss from which they ascend. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Self-love is its ruling passion, and falsity is the instrument by which it works out its ends. Falsity is the locust, self-love is the beast. They were united in the opponent of the two witnesses. For whether we understand the prophecy in relation to the church as a body, or to those within it who identify themselves with its principles, it is the same. When men are intellectually confirmed in views to which they have a natural leaning, and which are sanctioned by priestly authority, and strengthened by popular opinion, this hostility can hardly fail to be strongly excited by new views, which, however true, challenge the soundness of those which they regard and love as their own. This is the war which is treated of in this instance. And when congenial error prevails in the minds and affairs of men, truth cannot but be overcome and destroyed. When this is general, the church is near its end. And such is the state here represented. The next part of the vision shows what the result must be.

8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Jerusalem was where the Lord was crucified naturally; but the great city which is called Sodom and Egypt is where the

Lord was spiritually crucified, by the denial of His true character, as the only God of heaven and earth, even as to His Humanity. For it was of His Humanity the Lord spoke when He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." His Divinity possessed this power, in which it was underived and independent. It was His Humanity which, when fully glorified, received all the power of His indwelling Divinity. The church where the Lord was thus crucified is called Sodom and Egypt. Both these cities were distinguished for corruption and their opposition to the church. Sodom opposed itself to heaven and the church, as represented by the angels and Lot; Egypt opposed itself to the church by enslaving Israel, and refusing to let them go. Sodom represented evil opposed to the good of religion; Egypt represented error opposed to the truths of religion. When such is the state of the church, the Lord is crucified afresh, and His two witnesses are slain. The two witnesses were not only slain, but they were persecuted by that hatred which even death cannot appease. They were refused burial, and their dead bodies were exposed in the streets of the city. Their lifeless bodies are expressive images of the principles of the church, when the life of love is destroyed; and that life is destroyed in the minds of men when its saving efficacy is denied and opposed. Faith alone is a dead faith. And in truth, when faith is practically as well as theoretically alone, charity and works are dead; for no one of these has any spiritual life or saving power without the others.

9. While the bodies of the witnesses lie in the streets of the city, *they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.* In ancient times, and among the Jews as well as other peoples, the greatest indignity that could be offered to the posthumous fame of any one was to refuse him burial. "They shall die of grievous deaths, they shall not be lamented, neither shall they be buried; and their carcases shall be meat for the fowls of heaven" (Jer. xvi. 4). This, like many other customs, had its origin in the religious or spiritual idea connected with burial. The people of primeval times knew that when the body died, and the soul began truly to live, for the spirit returned to God; so that burial came to be a sign of resurrection into life. The denial of burial to the dead was therefore a strong expression of condemnation, a sign that they were deemed unworthy of eternal life. The refusal of burial to the two witnesses is expressive of strong repugnance to the principles they represented. As if those in faith alone were to say, "We will not only kill them, but

will do what we can to prevent them from being raised up again to life." Let us not be understood as ascribing this sentiment to all who hold the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. The opposition is descriptive of the opposition inherent in the doctrinal principle itself. The doctrine of faith alone does not come into deadly conflict with its opposite doctrine in the minds of all who consent to it; but only in the minds of those who have confirmed themselves in it intellectually and morally. When the true doctrine of salvation was restored in the writings of the Lord's messenger to the churches, it was met by very decided and bitter opposition, but chiefly among the clergy. The slow progress which the doctrine has made shows that, if not actually opposed by the people, it has found little favour with them. If they have not slain the two witnesses, they have allowed their dead bodies to lie in the streets; and have refused them burial, by denying them a place either in their understandings or hearts. In the streets of the city they are allowed to remain for three days and a half. Until the church was at an end and a new one had commenced, they could have no resurrection. They died with the old church; they live again with the new. The three days were completed at the time of the Last Judgment; the half day was completed at the time of the Lord's Second Coming. Since then great changes have taken place.

10. A still deeper state of unbelief and evil is described as succeeding this. Not content with killing and casting them out, they rejoice over them. *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.* The earth being a symbol of the church, those that dwell upon it are the members of the church. Those who are in the doctrine of faith alone, are of course meant. They rejoice over the death of the witnesses as men are wont to rejoice when they are relieved of the presence of a troublesome reprobate, who disturbs them with scruples and warnings. When truth is silenced, and good is laid asleep, these tormentors of the conscience cease to trouble, and leave men free to indulge in the delights of self-love and the love of the world. These two distinct but kindred delights are rejoicing and making merry, or being glad; and their reciprocation and mutual confirmation are meant by sending gifts one to another.

11, 12. But while the men of the church were rejoicing over the fallen witnesses of the truth, they were raised up and honoured by Him who sent them. *And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and*

great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. The end of the old church saw their death, the beginning of the new saw their resurrection. They were not, however, raised up on earth, but in heaven. The church exists, as we have had occasion to observe, in heaven as well as upon earth. The church comes down from heaven, and when it is driven from earth, it finds a refuge in heaven again. But heaven and earth have a wider signification than the places where angels and men have their dwellings. They include everything relating to the church, either as cause or effect. The Word is that which forms the church, and the character of the church is according to its understanding of the Word. The internal or spiritual sense of the Word is meant by heaven, for it forms the church in heaven, and the external or natural sense is meant by earth, for it forms the church on earth. The internal man or spiritual mind is also meant by heaven, for the regenerate internal is an image of the church in heaven, and the regenerate external or natural mind, is also meant by earth, for it is an image of the church on earth. Now, when the witnesses are spoken of as appearing and being slain on earth, we are to understand, not only that the principles they represent have been made known to the church on earth, but that they have been made to appear in the literal or natural sense of the Word, by a true interpretation of its teaching. When they are represented as being slain, we are instructed that the men of the church have denied the truth of that interpretation, and rejected the principles they represent as those of the Word. When they are represented as receiving life, we are to understand that at the commencement of a new dispensation or church, these rejected principles are restored by an influx of life from the Lord; and when they are represented as standing on their feet, we are instructed that they acquire a certain degree of stability and power in the lives of some in the church. And when, lastly, they are said to ascend into heaven, we are to understand that they are withdrawn and preserved in heaven, in the inner sense of the Word, and in the inner man, till they can be received outwardly and visibly. The enemies of the witnesses beheld them in their ascent. The Lord at His Second Coming was to be seen by those that pierced Him. He comes in the clouds; the witnesses disappear in a cloud. A cloud is a symbol of the literal sense of the Word. The enemies of the witnesses are those who reject and contemn the principles they represent. Those who deny them have some knowledge of them. They know

them in the letter, but not in the spirit; they see them in the cloud, but not above or beyond it. They can see the earthly side of spiritual things, but not the heavenly side. Here is the difference between them, and here the cause of separation. The line that distinguishes between the spiritual and the natural, is that which forms the line of separation between the spiritual and natural men of the Church.

The natural sense of the Word, which is meant by the cloud in which the witnesses ascended, reveals to natural men what they can understand, and conceals from them what they are unfit or unprepared to perceive. This revealing and concealing, manifesting to and withdrawing from the sight, is exemplified in other cases besides that of the two witnesses. Our Lord Himself as the Truth was manifested to mankind at the end of the Jewish Church; He was killed by those who dwelt in the city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt; and after He had lain three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, during which His enemies rejoiced and were glad, He received new life, and stood upon His feet, walking among His disciples during forty days, after which He ascended up into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. In the case of every new church, the new truth must first be preached to the old church, that it may find out those who are willing and ready to receive it, from whom the new church is to have its commencement. But that which gladdens the good exasperates the evil; and that which is accepted by the good is rejected by the evil. Every manifestation of the truth acts as a sort of judgment, for it separates the good from the evil, and therefore separates good itself from evil.

There is one difference between our Lord's ascension and that of the witnesses. The Lord's ascension appears to have been witnessed only by His disciples; when the two witnesses ascended up to heaven their enemies beheld them. It is said, however, of our Lord, that at His Second Coming He should be seen by every eye, by those also that pierced Him. His Second Coming is a coming to judgment; and judgment makes the Lord manifest to all, both evil and good. The good see Him as goodness and truth, the evil see Him as truth without goodness. The good are judged by truth tempered with mercy, the evil are judged by truth without mercy. This does not result from any difference in the Judge, but from the different states of those who are judged. All are judged out of those things that are written in their own book of life, as well as by the Lord's Book of Life. The merciful are judged in mercy, for they have mercifulness written on the table of their heart;

the unmerciful are judged without mercy, because unmercifulness is engraven upon their hearts. As they have judged, so are all judged. The coming down from heaven of the two witnesses to witness of the Lord upon earth, is connected with Lord's Advent, and is the descent and manifestation of the Divine Truths of His Word, which is Himself : for the Lord comes not in person, but in power, by the restoration of the true doctrines and the revelation of the spiritual sense of His Holy Word. All doctrine is drawn from the literal sense of the Word, and through the literal sense the spiritual sense is revealed. The literal sense is meant by the clouds in which the Son of Man comes, and the spiritual sense is meant by His power and great glory. The cloud which concealed Him in His ascent reveals Him in His descent. So the angels addressed the gazing multitude, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

The subject of this interesting part of the vision, the account of the two witnesses, may be briefly stated. Before, but about the time of the end of every church, preparation is made for the commencement of a new one ; for the new must have its beginning in the old. The germ of the new is preserved in the old ; and the old must die, that the new may live. Preparation is made for the commencement of the new by preaching anew to the old the truth from which it has departed, with such new infoldings or unfoldings as correspond to the altered condition of the human mind. For truth, like the human mind which was created to receive it, knows no finality, but goes on to infinity. The truths of the Christian church were preached to the Jews, before the end of the Jewish church, by John the Baptist and by the Lord Himself. These witnesses were slain, and in them the truth which they preached. Some of the Jews had, however, become receptive of the truth, and with them the Christian church had its commencement. When the Jews had slain the Lord, they rejoiced, supposing they had destroyed Him who tormented them. But after lying three days and nights in the heart of the earth, life entered into Him, and after forty days He ascended up into heaven in the presence of a number of His disciples, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Preparation has been made for the commencement of the New Christian Church, predicted under the figure of the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 2), by the preaching of the two universals of the New Church, the sole Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a life according to His commandments. These were rejected by the great body of the church at the time of its end. They were, however, received by a few; and the doctrines in their minds

could receive life, and stand upon their feet, and ascend up into the heaven of their inner man, and be there cherished and preserved, that they might gradually make their power felt, and induce men to receive their testimony. In the several dispensations of the church, the Adamic, the Noetic, and the Israelitish, which successively existed prior to the Lord's Coming into the world, revealed truth was necessarily more and more infolded, and thus obscured, until, in the Israelitish Church, its spiritual character was almost entirely concealed in the civil and moral laws in which it was contained, and its eternal sanctions were almost entirely lost sight of in the temporal ends by which obedience to them was enforced. The Coming of the Lord was the commencement of a new ascending order, in which the truth could be more and more unfolded, by removing the coverings of the letter of the Word, and bringing more and more into view the spirit and the life that dwell within. Our Lord did this with the old law, and by revealing new spiritual truth, so far as the human mind was able to bear it. For even He taught in parables. He declared, however, to His disciples, that the time would come when He would no more speak to them in proverbs, but when He should show them plainly of the Father. The promised time was that of His Second Coming. The Lord's Second Advent was to complete the plan of human redemption, not by bringing the world to an end, but by ending the first dispensation of the Christian church, and commencing a second, in which the principles of the Christian religion would be more perfectly developed than in the first. Some, indeed most Christians, believe that religious truth admits of no expansion. Yet, why should this be so? Science knows no limit, because the works of God can never be known to perfection. Is the Word of God less profound or more fathomable than His works? Truth, like the human mind, which was created to receive it, knows no finality, but may go on to infinity. And this infinity is simply an image of the Infinite.

13. The effects of their persecution and removal were, that *the same hour the witnesses ascended was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.* When the principles of love and truth, which are the essentials of religion, are rejected and removed, the church is entirely subverted. Its subversion is meant by the earthquake. The cause of the church's destruction is within itself. The spiritual earthquake is produced by the activity of the fire of self-love and the love of the world. This fire, long pent up, at last puts forth its strength, and, in

its struggles to be free, produces a commotion that shakes and overthrows the church. The tenth part of the city falling expresses, not the extent but the character of the destruction. The most familiar case of the meaning of a tenth is that of tithing in the Jewish Church. A tenth of all their produce was to be given by Israel to the Lord, as an acknowledgment that He was the Giver of the whole, and as a means of securing His blessing on what was reserved for the people's use. The tenth, therefore, means all, or that without which the other parts are of no spiritual value. The fall of a tenth part of the city means the destruction of all doctrinal truth in the church; and with it the loss of the true understanding of holy truth, which is truth from goodness, meant by the seven thousand men that were slain. But in all cases of destruction a remnant is saved. Indeed, those who are here treated of as the destroyed and the preserved, are those in whom the remains of goodness and truth had been destroyed, and those in whom some remnant of goodness and truth had been preserved. A tenth signifies remains; and the tenth part of the city that fell and the seven thousand that perished in it, mean those in whom the remains of holy truth and goodness had been destroyed; while the remnant who were affrighted mean those in whom some remains of goodness and truth had been preserved. These had that within them which made them susceptible of fear. The fear of death was before them, but it was spiritual and eternal death, not that of the body. This fear sways the heart when first impressed with a sense of danger, arising from a consciousness of sin. The fear of suffering leads to the fear of offending. This is holy fear, for there is love within it. When the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, those who are led by holy fear to give glory to the God of heaven, by confession and worship of His holy Name, are saved.

14. Of the three woes proclaimed by the angel that was seen flying through the midst of heaven (viii. 13), *the second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.* Quickly means certainly. The third woe to the church is that which brings it to an end, to which it is declared to be hastening with terrible certainty.

15. But before the third woe a new cause of joy is announced. *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.* In the providence of God a full end is never permitted without provision being made for a new beginning. The sounding of the seventh angel, unlike the sounding of the preceding six, awakens voices in heaven

which proclaim tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. These tidings are of similar import to those brought by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem; for both announcements relate to the Coming of the Lord; that to His First Advent, this to His Second. The seventh angel, like the seventh day of the Jewish week, expresses a state of holy rest and peace, after a period of labour and tribulation. The state which the sounding of the seventh trumpet discloses answers to this happy symbol. After successive states of disorder and desolation, the reign of order and prosperity is commenced.

No doubt this prophecy will be completely verified. The kingdoms of this world will come to be ruled by the principles of justice and judgment, which are the habitation of the throne of God. Whenever and wherever these rule, in the Church, in the State, or in the individual mind, there is the kingdom of God. And the promise is, that this kingdom shall universally prevail. While this is the ultimate fulfilment of the prediction, it has an immediate reference to a nearer object. When John saw and heard what he here records he was in the spirit, and what he heard and saw had immediate reference to the spiritual world, and to the kingdom or kingdoms there. The kingdoms of that world are not as the kingdoms of the natural world. The kingdoms there consist of those who live under the rule of the principle of truth; for there all are arranged according to some general principle to which their mind and life are conformed. There are, indeed, but two universal principles by which heaven and the church are governed, the principle of goodness and the principle of truth, or of love to God and love to each other; but there are numerous degrees of these affections, as there are various gifts, but the same spirit. In heaven itself, viewed in its relation to the Lord, there is but one kingdom, since there is but one King; but viewed in respect to the two universal loves which prevail in heaven, there are two kingdoms; for those who are in love to the Lord form one kingdom, and those who are in love to the neighbour form another. Yet these, though distinct, form one, as the kingdom of the heart and the kingdom of the lungs in the human body. The kingdoms of this world, which are declared to have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, are all those who were governed by principles of doctrine which were in accordance with the truth. Previous to the judgment, and while the evil were yet mixed with the good, these could not be so closely conjoined to the Lord as to be, in the full and perfect sense, His subjects; but when the evil were removed, the obstructions to union were removed also, and the light and love of God could flow

into the truths they had in their minds; and these truths could thus become illustrated with Divine light and warmed with Divine love, and so become the Lord's. But we may view this subject in relation to ourselves, the members of the church individually. In this application the world is the natural mind. When first instructed in Christian doctrine we receive the truth as knowledge; and employ it in forming principles of belief and conduct. The first act which we are enabled to do by means of the knowledge of truth is to distinguish between good and evil in ourselves, not only in our actions but in our motives. A second and still more important act is to separate them. This is properly a work of judgment. For while there is a work of Divine judgment which consists in dividing the good from the evil in the spiritual world, there is a corresponding work of judgment effected in the mind of every one in the natural world who is regenerated and saved. Previous to this judgment, which effects an actual separation of good and evil in our minds, the truths we know and believe are not the Lord's but our own. They are not imbued with His Spirit only, but principally with our own; they do not rule and govern in His Name only, but principally in our own; they are not employed for His glory only, but principally for our own. When the Christian disciple passes through the judgment, the tares are separated from the wheat, the goats from the sheep, that is, falsity from truth and evil from the good in our minds and hearts. And when evil and falsity are cast out, good and truth are gathered in. The principles thus separated and exalted are truly the Lord's, for they live and act from Him and for His glory. In Scripture a king represents truth as a ruling principle in the mind; and the thoughts and affections are its subjects. Truth first exists in the mind as knowledge. And although the truths thus acquired are in themselves Divine, they are not Divine, nor even heavenly in the mind, on their first reception, but worldly, being as yet under worldly desires and ends. When these worldly ends are removed, and higher ends are substituted for them, then, from being worldly, they become heavenly, and in a certain sense Divine: the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. It is the opinion of several eminent critics that we should here read kingdom, not kingdoms. We have already explained the duality of the one universal kingdom of the Lord. And all kingdoms which are capable of being brought into subjection and harmony with that one kingdom have a principle of unity, being so connected as to form one, being one in nature and end.

There is a peculiarity in the designation of the Divine Ruler to whom the kingdoms of the world are to become subject. We read in the epistles, "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 23); but this is only another form of our Lord's own words, when He prayed respecting His disciples, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us. . . . I in them, and Thou in Me" (John xvii. 21, 23). And in the next chapter of the Revelation we read of "the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ." The Christ of God is not, therefore, of itself a singular expression. But here we have the Lord and His Christ. And in the Revelation the single word Lord never refers to any one but to Jesus Christ Himself. What then are we to understand by the Lord and His Christ? The Lord and His Christ are the Lord and His Humanity. In the church of His First Advent, the Lord's Humanity had come to be regarded as spiritual, but not Divine; therefore as finite, and not having life in itself; contrary to the Lord's express declaration, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so likewise hath He given unto the Son to have life in Himself." For this reason the Lord appeared like a lamb as it had been slain. The Lord is spiritually slain when the Divinity of His Humanity is denied. In the church of His Second Advent this is acknowledged. It is not a doctrine of the true church that the Lord is equal to the Father as to His Divinity, but inferior to the Father as to His Humanity. The Divinity of the Lord is the Father, His Humanity is the Son; and the Father and the Son are equal and are one,—one Lord and one Person. This is taught in the declaration itself, that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; for it is added, "And HE shall reign for ever and ever." It might, indeed, be argued that according to the grammatical sense, the Lord is He who is to reign. How then could the kingdoms be said to have become those of the Lord and His Christ? Can the kingdoms be Christ's if the Lord only can be said to reign? The truth expressed in these words it is of the utmost importance that the church should know and confess. The glory and the power of Christianity are not only in the Divinity of Jesus, but in the Divinity of His Humanity. It was not as God, but as God-Man that the Lord overcame the powers of hell, and opened heaven to all believers. It is not as God, but as God-Man, that He subdues the kingdom of evil in the hearts of men, and establishes in its place the kingdom of righteousness; and that He there reigns for ever and ever. Whether we apply this great truth to the church as a body

or to the individual Christian, equally true is the prophecy in Daniel relating to the same event: “There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (vii. 14).

16, 17. When the seventh angel had sounded, and the heavenly voices had sung the triumph of the Lord in the establishment of His new kingdom, *the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned.* The adoration of the elders has the same signification here as in the fifth chapter, where, in union with the four beasts, they glorify the Lamb, as worthy to take the book and open its seven seals. The heavens reciprocate the action of the Lord; and as He acts through heaven upon the church, so does the adoration of the church ascend to the Lord through heaven. The subject of their adoration is the Lord's having taken to Him His great power and reigned. It is only necessary for us to consider this particular. Power here can mean only relative power. The Divine power, as it is in itself in the Lord, is infinite, and is ever the same. But His power in heaven and the church varies with their states. His power over them is proportionate to His power in them, and His power in them is proportioned to the hold which His love and truth have upon their hearts and minds. If angels and men should cease to love and believe in God, His power over them would be at an end. When evil and unbelief prevail among men, the power of the Lord in relation to them is proportionally diminished; and something must be done to remove the cause, that men perish not, and that the church may be restored. When the Lord became incarnate, it was to bring Himself into a new and nearer relationship with His creatures, so as to be able to act upon them more directly and powerfully. On that occasion He took to Him His great power and reigned. But even this, it was foretold, would suffer diminution through the departure of the church from her first love, and her falling away into grievous error. The Lord therefore promised to give a new manifestation of Himself, by coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. On this occasion, too, the increase of His power is relative. It is effected by removing obstructions and re-opening the communication between the Lord and man. The written Word is the primary medium of this communication. When its truth is obscured or perverted, the

Lord's power by it is so far diminished. The principal means of restoring His power in the church is to restore the true sense of His Word. But every new church requires some new adaptation or development of the truth. The human mind does not remain always the same. Divine truth is adequate to its requirements, for the Word of God is profounder than the mind of man. New depths may be opened in it, as the human mind is prepared to receive them. The truths made known to the church of the Lord's Second Advent are not therefore simply the truths of the church of His First Advent restored. Besides these there are new truths, or new unfoldings of the old truths, which present deeper, clearer views of Divine and spiritual subjects than the first church was able to understand or prepared to receive. The spiritual sense of the Word, now disclosed, is a new and great power in the hand of the Lord, by which He is able to exercise His regenerating and therefore saving power in the souls of men, in still greater fulness and effect than before. By the opening of the spiritual sense of the Word, the light of the moon has become as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun has become sevenfold as the light of seven days.

A secondary medium of communication between the Lord and man is the angelic heaven. The Divine influence comes through the angels of heaven to men on earth, or through the church in heaven to the church on earth. But the descent of this may be obstructed by obstacles existing in the middle state, where all departed spirits first congregate, and where they remain till the final judgment. Supposing fifty generations of those who have formed the church on earth to be there assembled, great must be their power for good or evil, but finally for evil chiefly, since a declining church fills the intermediate state with those who have departed farther and farther from the purity of the truth and life of vital religion. The removal of these from the world of spirits is necessary before a new church can be formed on earth; and this can only be effected by a general judgment, which removes all to their final abodes. When the intermediate region, through which all heavenly influences pass to men on earth, is freed from those disturbing mediums, then can a new church on earth be established. The good in the world of spirits being separated from the evil, they first become receptive of the new influence, and constitute the beginning of the new dispensation; for of them are formed the New Heaven from which the New Church on earth descends. The formation of these into a new kingdom is that great event which follows the sounding of the last trumpet, and which is celebrated by

the voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever;” and for which the elders fall down before the throne in profound adoration, and worship God, for having taken unto Him His great power and reigned.

18. The elders continue, but in a different strain—*And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy Name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.* As those who became subjects of the Lord’s new kingdom are the good in the middle state, who were delivered by the judgment, the nations which were angry are the evil who were cast down. They are said to be angry, because judgment upon the evil is effected by laying open their inward states of life, when their concealed hostility to God, or to His goodness and truth, is brought out, and manifests itself in anger against them. But the judgment which casts down the evil raises up the good. The time of the dead, that they should be judged, though a time of wrath to the wicked, is a time of reward to the righteous. Reward and punishment are not, however, to be understood as outward gifts and inflictions. In the spiritual world, and in spiritual life, reward is outward happiness springing from inward goodness, and punishment is outward misery flowing from inward evil; for good contains its own reward, and evil its own punishment. Three classes of the good who are rewarded are mentioned. Prophets and saints are those within the church who know the truth, and live according to it. These are the Lord’s servants and saints. Those who fear the Lord are those of all religions, who have any fear and worship of God; small and great being those who are less and more in the knowledge and life of their religious beliefs. While these are rewarded with eternal life, the evil are punished with eternal death. This is called destruction. And God is said to destroy them which had destroyed the earth. The church, which is meant by the earth, is destroyed by error and evil. But men destroy the church in themselves by destroying in themselves the principles of goodness and truth.

19. A further manifestation of the states of the good and the evil preceding the judgment is now described. *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.* The temple of God had been closed,

as His Book of Life had been sealed. The opening of the book prepared for the opening of the temple. The temple of the Lord on earth had been closed by error and evil. And when the temple on earth is closed, so, to men, is the temple in heaven; for the men of the church shut heaven against themselves; they even shut out belief in, and the Divine influences flowing from, the temple of the Lord's Body, which is eminently meant by the temple. When evils and errors are thus far removed, the temple can again be opened. When the temple was opened in heaven there was seen in it the ark of the testament. This circumstance is very significant. The church, of whose state and end this part of the Revelation treats, is that which assigns the whole of salvation to faith without the deeds of the law—not the ceremonial but the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments. When the temple is opened the ark is seen—the ark that contained the tables on which the Ten Commandments were engraven by the finger of God. This was a sign that the law was restored to its rightful place and authority. The ark is called the ark of the testament, properly, the ark of the covenant. A testament is a writing by which one person leaves his possessions to another. A covenant is an agreement between two persons, formed by mutual consent, and resting on conditions on both sides. Such is the ark of the covenant. It is an agreement between God and man. God promises to give life; man undertakes to yield obedience. That it ever should have been supposed that salvation is possible without obedience to the moral law, or that its conditions could be performed by one, and its reward be received by another, is indeed amazing. The disclosing of the ark of the covenant in the opened temple is a refutation and reproof of that great error, and a sign that the sacred tables are again to be means and conditions of salvation. When the temple was opened and the ark was seen, there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. Similar effects followed the opening of the seventh seal, as these which now follow the sounding of the seventh trumpet. These are signs of the passing away of the world—the church—with a great noise. These commotions are the opposites of the peace and stability that are given to the faithful, and indicate tumult and change among the "nations" who were angry. The tumult of conflicting opinions, of angry disputations, of dogmatic assertions, are the lightnings, voices, and thunderings: the changed condition of the evil are the upheavings of the earth; and the destructive errors which they utter are the great hail. All these elemental commotions are symbols of those which

agitate the church, when its “elements” are about to melt with the fervent heat of earthly loves. There are, however, other signs, both good and bad, which we are called upon to mark and interpret, before the entire end and the complete beginning. These are treated of in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER stage in the progress of the Lord's Divine work of establishing anew His kingdom upon earth is described in this chapter, opposed here, as every such work is, by that evil power which ever resists the operations of infinite love and wisdom, from the perversion of which it sprung.

1. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.* The magnificent sight now presented to the Seer involves matter of the deepest interest and the utmost importance. The woman that John now saw in heaven is the same that he afterwards beheld coming down out of heaven. In both cases the woman is a figure of the church. In the present case she represents the New Church, the Church of the Lord's Second Advent, as already existing in heaven, but not yet able to make her actual descent into the world. Her appearance in heaven at this juncture is in keeping with the events which precede, and forms a suitable conclusion to the series. The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ; the temple of God has been opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant seen therein; and now appears in heaven an image of the church herself. Let us look upon this glorious appearance. The woman is clothed with the sun, the moon is under her feet, and upon her head is a crown of twelve stars. Throughout the Word the luminaries of the material heaven represent the luminaries of the immaterial—of the angelic heaven, the church, the human mind. The sun is the symbol of love, the moon of faith, the stars of the knowledges of love and faith. In predicting the endless glory of the restored church, the prophet addressing her says, “Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself” (Isaiah lx. 20).

In predicting the end of the church, which is the consummation of the age, commonly understood to be the end of the world, the Lord says, “Immediately after the tribulation of these days the sun shall

be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." What more expressive, as symbols of the end of the church, than her sun ceasing to shine, her moon not giving light, and her stars falling from heaven? What these luminaries are to the earth, love, faith, and truth are to the church. When these fail, not her night only but her end is come. As the end of the church is described by the darkening of the lights of heaven, what more appropriate imagery could be employed to describe the church, when restored to her former splendour, and crowned with her former glory, than to present her as a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars? There is, however, a particular as well as a general meaning in this description. The woman was clothed with the sun to teach us that the church "dwelleth in love," and she that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God; for God is love. Love is the life of the church, as it is of religion. The moon was under her feet to instruct us that faith is the foundation of the church. And she had on her head a crown of twelve stars to indicate to us that the knowledge of heavenly things crown the church with intelligence and wisdom.

2. The church being represented by the woman, what now follows must be understood in relation to the church. *And she being with child cried travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.* The church is spoken of in the Word as the mother of the faithful. "Jerusalem which is above, is the mother of us all" (Gal. iv. 26). Those who are born again, or from above, are the sons and daughters of the church, who is their mother as truly as God is their Father. But there is a more abstract sense in which the maternity of the church may be understood. The church is the mother of the principles, the birth of which in the human mind make men the children of God. She is also the mother of the principles of goodness and truth, as made known to the world; for the church is the medium through which the Lord reveals Himself to mankind. But the church here represented is the church in heaven, and she cannot come down to the earth and dwell among men until they are prepared to receive her. The child with which she is pregnant is He who is to prepare them, by His rule, for the descent of the church, whose offspring He is; and she now cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. Sin, which in the letter of the Word is said to be the origin of the pains of childbirth, is truly the cause of the pain and anguish with which the new birth is attended. The new birth is painful in proportion to the prevalence of evil and error. And

whether we consider the woman as the mother of the faithful or of the faith itself, the state of the church on earth, at the time to which this part of the prophecy relates, was such as to render it painful and difficult for the church in heaven to bring forth her heavenly principles, whose government and teaching were to prepare for the establishment of the true church among men.

3. While the travail of the church is painful, a monster stands ready to devour her offspring as soon as it is born. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.* It may, in the first place, be asked why this monstrous form should appear in heaven? Its appearance there will not surprise us if we call to mind a declaration of our Lord, that He beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. It may be more suitable to inquire what heaven that was in which the dragon appeared, in which there was war between him and Michael, and from which, like Satan, he was cast down. This could not be the heaven of angels. The book itself enables us to know what heaven is to be understood. For we read in chapter xx. that John saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it; from whose face the earth and heaven fled away. This was the heaven in which the great red dragon appeared, the nature of which we shall consider more particularly when we come to this conflict with Michael.

As the woman is a symbol of the church which the Lord was to establish upon earth, the dragon represents that which is opposite and hostile to the church, and is in the desire and effort to prevent it from coming into existence. As the church, essentially considered, consists of the principles of love and truth, the dragon must represent principles of evil and falsity. These are terms of wide significance. Every true church has a peculiar character. Although the essential principles of the true church are always the same, being love to God and love to man, they differ in quality and degree according to the character of the church, as determined by the state and condition of the people among whom it is established. The love of God and the knowledge of God have a necessary relation to each other. Men may indeed know God without loving Him, but they cannot love God without knowing Him; and the character of their love has a necessary relation to the nature and extent of their knowledge. Christians can have a more perfect love of God than the Jews had, because they have a more perfect knowledge of Him, as He has manifested Himself in the person of Christ. The more men know of the nature and character of God, the more perfectly they can love Him; for the love of

God is the love of what He is, which is the love of His perfections ; and the love of His perfections is practically the love of being perfect, even as He is perfect. There is no true love but this. Jesus Christ exhibited the Divine nature and character in His own person and in His life and teaching. And if that pattern had been kept before the mind of the church as the Divine exemplar for human imitation, there would have been no falling away, but progressive advancement. This perfect pattern was, however, departed from. The church did not continue to be satisfied with beholding God in Christ. When, instead of seeing and worshipping the Father in the Son, as the soul in the body, she made one person of the Father and another of the Son ; she made them different in character as well as in person. They came also to be regarded as standing in a different relation and attitude to the human race. As their Creator and Lawgiver, the first person of the Godhead demanded of them perfect obedience to His laws ; and when the fall took place, His justice required the eternal death of the whole race, which had sinned in Adam. The Father of mankind was thus placed before their minds as a terror-inspiring Being. His character was in fact the reflex, and therefore the creation, of their own. And further, to exemplify their own low standard of justice, they found a way of escape for the human race, by God's covenanting with His Son to bear the punishment due to mankind for their sins, so as to enable Him, consistently with His perfect justice, to forgive them. Having received full satisfaction for all sin that men had committed or can possibly commit, men are now saved, not for anything which Christ may enable them to do, but for what Christ Himself, their Substitute, has done ; faith in His All-sufficient atonement being the one only condition of salvation. Such representation of the character of God has a tendency to undermine all true religion. This is the theological system, and this is the religious faith, represented by the great red dragon. They are in direct antagonism to those of genuine Christianity, especially as now restored and exalted in the New Church, which the woman represents. Under the new dispensation, the truths of the Christian religion are more fully revealed, and may be more clearly and interiorly perceived. This results from an enlightened interpretation of the letter of the Word, by which its doctrines are restored to their original purity, and from the unfolding of its spiritual sense, by which the church on earth is brought into more intimate relation and nearer communion with the church in heaven. The laws of interpretation and exposition are so exact and clear that the truth is placed beyond the possibility of mistake or

corruption, and the church is thus placed upon immovable foundations. Of these the Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the chief corner-stone, being known and acknowledged as the only living and true God, the sole Object of worship by the church on earth and the church in heaven. Salvation is effected by the union of love, faith, and works, which are not only means but conditions of eternal life. Many particulars are included in these two general tenets, but they are only the lesser lights that make up the effulgence and glory of the greater. One of the particulars included in the doctrine of the Lord is the Divinity of His Humanity.

It is by His Humanity being Divine that the Lord, as Man, is present with all men with all the power of His salvation; for the Lord's saving power is in His Divine Humanity. As Man He redeemed, and as Man He saves us. As Man He fulfilled the law, suffered and died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven; as Man He promised to be with His church always, even unto the end; and as Man He promised to come again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. By virtue of His incarnation the Lord is Immanuel, God with us, ever operating to quicken us, and make us like unto Himself. We can only be saved by being made like unto Him, by living with Him, dying with Him, and rising with Him. It is therefore by doing in our measure as He has done, and becoming like what He became, that we can be where He is; for heaven and the church are His mystical body, the image of His own glorious body. Love, faith, and obedience are the means by which this state is formed and perfected in us. The only condition of admission into heaven is heavenly-mindedness. So much newness of heart and spirit, so much meetness for the kingdom of God. It is not surprising that such a religion as this should meet with opposition, both in the spiritual and in the natural world, from those who have divided the Godhead and degraded the Decalogue; who have in fact resolved salvation into faith, and this not faith in Jesus as our Saviour from sin, but faith in what He has suffered to save us from punishment. This faith is the dragon, and his characteristics describe its nature.

In the 20th chapter the dragon is called "that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan." The serpent is emblematical of the sensual part of man's nature, or that which is called the flesh. The flesh lusteth against the spirit (Gal. v. 17), and there is another law in the members warring against the law of the mind (Rom. vii. 23.) This lusting and warring of the flesh against the spirit, and of the spirit

against the flesh, are often spoken of and variously described in the Word. It began in Eden. And the old serpent, that tempted and seduced man in paradise, lusts and wars against him still. It is man's own sensual nature which lusts and wars against his spiritual nature. These are here meant by the dragon and the woman, as they are by Eve and the serpent in Eden. But the dragon of the Revelation is no longer the mere serpent of Genesis. The sensual wisdom of our day is not simply that of primeval times. It has acquired the lessons of science and the arguments of reason; and these have greatly increased its resources and its power. The dragon, therefore, has seven heads and ten horns. The head is the emblem of wisdom, as horns are of power. But the wisdom here represented is that of the dragon, which is foolishness with God, and his power is that which avails only against the foolish. The number of the dragon's heads and the number of his horns do not, however, indicate so much the extent as the character of his wisdom and power. Seven is a holy number, ten is a complete one. As the unfaithful profane what is holy, that which is the symbol of holiness with the faithful is a symbol of profanity with them. The seven heads of the dragon are therefore signs of the profaning of the holy truths of the church, and thus of the Word. The holy truths of the Word are meant by the seven crowns or diadems which he had upon his heads, and are the holy truths of the Word, profaned by being employed to confirm error in opposition to truth. The truths of the Word are still in themselves precious and holy, though used to confirm heretical opinions. These truths falsely interpreted and applied give heresies their power; for whatever is nominally and apparently scriptural is powerful with those who have a reverence for holy things, but who keep the understanding in blind subjection to faith. Before the truths of Scripture can be made to confirm what is false, they must be falsified, or so interpreted and applied as to say what they were never designed to teach. For instance, the Scriptures teach the doctrine of a Trinity in God. When the Scriptures on the subject are so explained as to make them teach that the Trinity consists of three Persons, each of whom singly and by Himself is God and Lord, those truths are falsified. The Scriptures teach that man is saved by faith; but when its truths relating to the subject are so explained as to make them teach that he is saved by faith alone, these truths are falsified.

4. While the description of the dragon gives us to understand the nature of the principle he represents, that which now comes to be said of him describes its actions. *And his tail drew the third part of*

the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth. The tail signifies the power of confirming what the head devises. “The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet, that teacheth lies, he is the tail” (Isaiah ix. 15). Stars are knowledges of truth. The stars are drawn from their place in heaven and cast to the earth, when the truths of the Word are so explained as to confirm natural views of Divine and spiritual things. It is not necessary to suppose this is done intentionally or directly. But when a false principle has once been adopted, it may be after ages of gradual obscuration of and departure from the truth, it is surprising how ingeniously the Scriptures can be explained, so as to bring their testimony into conformity with it. It is thus that the doctrine of three Persons in one God, down to its last consequence, the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, came to be adopted and confirmed. The first and last of their doctrines being meant by the dragon, the truths of the Word and their application in support of them are meant by the stars and the tail of the dragon drawing and casting them to the earth. He is said, indeed, to have brought within his power only a third part of the stars; but we have seen that a third part, like three, means all; and here it means all the truths of the Word that relate to the doctrines which the dragon represents.

How the tail of the dragon draws the stars and casts them to the earth, may be shown by a few examples of the manner in which those who advocate the doctrines he represents explain the truths of the Word, so as to bring them into a seeming compliance with their views. The Scriptures declare the unity of God, but this is explained to mean unity as opposed to the gods among many of the heathen. Our Lord said, “I and the Father are One,” which is explained to mean that they are one God, but not one person. In regard to the commandments as conditions of salvation, our Lord said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;” which is explained to mean that the Lord Jesus came, indeed, to fulfil the law, but to fulfil it, not as our example, but as our substitute. When He said to the young man, “If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments,” He addressed him, it is said, as a Jew, who was under the law; or, as some maintain, only to convince him that he could not keep the law, and therefore could not be saved by it. The Scriptures declare the Lord is our righteousness, and that all our righteousness is of Him; which means, it seems, not that He is the Author of our righteousness, which is wrought into us by obedience, but our substituted righteousness as imparted to us through faith. The

Bible tells us that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; which is said to teach, not that our own righteousness, but that all righteousness whatever that we do is worthless. The Word declares that God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity; which is explained to teach, not that we must put away evil and iniquity from God's sight, but that to appear in the presence of the Holy One, our uncleanness must be covered and concealed by the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness. It is thus that the truths of the Word are drawn within the power of natural reason, and are cast down from the spiritual to the natural sphere of the mind.

Having cast down the stars, *the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.* The true church is ever opposed by the false, the new by the old; but it is against the doctrine that the opposition is immediately directed. This part of the prophecy describes the desire and effort of those who are in the doctrine of three Divine persons and of salvation by faith alone, to destroy in its birth the doctrine of the Lord and of life. Something like this occurs in relation to the Lord's First Advent, in the attempt of Herod to destroy the young child as soon as He was born in Bethlehem; and we shall also find something similar in the Divine means for the preservation of the man-child to those appointed for the preservation of the child Jesus.

5. *And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.* The birth of the man-child is the symbol of a great event. The man-child has been considered to be a figure of Jesus, not as to His person but as to His kingdom. The Lord's kingdom is His government, and the principles of His government are the laws and doctrines of His Word. The man-child is the doctrine of the New Church, represented by the woman. Before the church in heaven can descend and become the church on earth, her principles must be made known among men. The church can only exist where her principles are known. Knowledge is the precursor of the church, as consisting of faith and love. How can we believe or love that of which we know nothing! The birth of the man-child is therefore the birth or revelation of the doctrine of the church which the woman represents. In agreement with His symbolic character, the Son born of the woman was to be a ruler and instructor of men. He was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This symbol of His power seems to bespeak severity, as if He would chastise the nations as well as rule them. But both the literal and the spiritual meaning of His rod

explain the true nature of his rule. What is here rendered to rule means also to feed ; and to feed spiritually is to teach ; so that the mission of the man-child was to prepare men, by the instruction and the rule of truth, for the descent among them of the church itself. Iron is the symbol of natural truth, which is that contained in the literal sense of the Word.

But the birth of the man-child teaches another practical truth. There is a corresponding birth in every one who becomes a true member of the church. The principles of religion are conceived in the mind and born in the life. That principle, too, which the dragon represents, is present and active in the mind, ready to devour the heavenly principle as soon as it is born. Nothing good can be conceived in the spirit which has not its antagonist in the flesh ; and every effort to produce it in the life meets with resistance from the natural will and understanding. The presence of good also excites evil, and inspires it with a desire to destroy it. It is this which gives rise to that mental conflict which is called temptation. This conflict continues till one is overcome, and the other obtains the dominion. But the new-born principle is not subjected to this trial. Providence protects it as it did the woman and her child. When the woman had brought forth her child, it was caught up unto God and to His throne. This is a circumstance deserving of our careful attention. It describes the nature of the Lord's providential economy in certain conditions of the church and stages of the regenerate life. It is exemplified in other cases. When Moses was to be preserved, God did not forcibly prevent the Egyptians from slaying the Hebrew infants, but provided that the child should be hid, and, after being drawn out of the river, reared in the palace of Pharaoh. A far more precious life than that of Moses, even the life of Jesus, was not preserved by arresting the arm of Herod, but by removing the infant Saviour from the scene of the massacre of the innocents. In the first place, this teaches a great lesson. Many wonder why Divine power is not put forth to prevent evil. Let them reflect. Evil consists of motive and act. If the motive were removed the act would cease ; but if the act were always forcibly prevented, the motive would resist all attempts to remove it. The purpose of the Lord's providence or grace is to remove evil from the heart as a motive. Therefore evil as an act is permitted, within certain limits, for the sake of this as an end. God indeed commands men to do no evil, and threatens them with punishment if they disobey. But if, in obedience to the command, men desist from evil, this is their own act, and they have a motive in doing

it ; and the one motive weakens and finally overcomes the other. In this way only can evil be prevented in a way beneficial to mankind. Although evil is not forcibly prevented, protection is afforded to those against whom it is directed. The dragon is not driven, by an immediate act of Divine power, from where he stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born, but the child, when born, was caught up to God and His throne.

The protection of good from the power of evil is effected by removing it out of sight, and this is especially necessary in its infancy, when the good is weak and the evil is strong. On several occasions, Jesus, when the Jews were enraged and threatened violence, removed Himself out of their sight. When an infant, He was carried down to Egypt to escape the rage of Herod. A case more formally like the present is that of Enoch, who “walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him.” In that instance the removal from earth to heaven of the knowledge of truth which men were no longer able to understand or appreciate is representatively described. In the case of the man-child, his being taken up to God and to His throne teaches us that a constant operation of Divine Providence withdraws sacred things from the power and even the presence of those who would destroy or profane them. We have already referred to this subject, and we have seen it exemplified in the case of the two witnesses, who, though killed and dishonoured, were nevertheless, on being restored to life, taken up into heaven, beyond the reach of their enemies. In regard to the individual, good and truth, born in the rational mind, are taken up to God and His throne when they are raised into the spiritual mind, there to be cherished until by conflict evil has been overcome and cast out, as the dragon was by Michael, so that the heavenly principles of the new man may with safety be brought out into open manifestation. There is mention of God and His throne, which mean what is Divine and what is heavenly, for heaven is God’s throne ; and the man-child is caught up to God and His throne when the power of Divine and heavenly love so penetrates and surrounds the genuine doctrine of the church, as to protect it from the power of evil.

6. While the child was caught up to God and to His throne, *the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days.* This is a state through which every new church, like every new man, has to pass. There is no safe way from Egypt to Canaan but through the wilderness. When the young church has left the slavery and the flesh pots of Egypt, she is protected and

nourished by the hand of God, until she is introduced into the land of corn and wine, milk and honey. At the end of the old church, when men live to the flesh, there is no spiritual nourishment for the new, except that which comes immediately from the Lord out of heaven; as the manna that fell every morning around the camp of the Israelites, and the water that flowed from the flinty rock, which spiritual rock was Christ (1 Cor. x. 4). Jesus Himself passed through the wilderness, where He was tempted to eat the bread of worse than Egyptian bondage; and John the Baptist lived in the wilderness of Judea, where his meat was locusts and wild honey. These are types of the spiritual condition of the church, and the Divine means of its protection and nourishment, while it is young and feeble, and until it makes some progress towards maturity. In the wilderness the church had a place prepared of God. When we know that place means state, we can understand that the state which the Lord provides for the church during her incipient state is one in which quietness and obscurity are her strength and security. The obscurity of the Christian church after the Lord's Ascension was, no doubt, one of the means of its preservation; and the comparative quietness it enjoyed contributed to its nourishment and internal growth, preparatory to its extension. In this state, too, there is temptation, represented by that of Israel hungering and thirsting in the desert, which tried them so severely, as to make them murmur against Moses, and reproach him for having brought them up out of Egypt. These states, and the succour the church receives during their continuance, are described in the Word: "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation" (Ps. cvii. 4). The Divine care of which the church is the subject during her wilderness state is also very clearly revealed: "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye" (Deut. xxxii. 10). Forty years were the children of Israel thus led, instructed, and kept in the desert. The period of the woman's abode in the wilderness is forty and two months. This number, too, has reference to temptation, which is so often expressed by forty. But it has also relation to that which is otherwise expressed by twelve hundred and sixty days, and by time, times, and half a time, and by three and a half. All these, we have seen, signify an end and

a beginning. Forty and two months make three years and a half: and this means the end of the Old Church and the beginning of the New; that is, the close of one dispensation and the commencement of another. For although at this juncture the New Church may be said to *be*, it cannot be said to *exist*. It is not yet established in the world. It has come out of Egypt, but it has not yet entered into Canaan. It is yet in the wilderness. The principles of the church, as the two witnesses, have ascended out of Sodom and Egypt, and have appeared in heaven as the woman clothed with the sun, and have been born into the world as the man-child. But the woman has been unable to find a city of habitation among men: she has gone into the wilderness until the fulness of the time, when she can appear as the bride, the Lamb's wife. Before this can be, the enemy which threatens the destruction both of her child and of herself must be overcome.

7. 8. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. Foiled in his attempt to destroy the feeble and seemingly defenceless child at his birth, the dragon seems to have pursued him, when he was caught unto God and to His throne, and to have been met by Michael, who opposed him in his evil progress. Such may be regarded as the outward aspect of the vision. But the vision is an outward sign of an inward state. To this we have to direct our attention.

The heaven in which there was war was not the heaven of angels, or of the just made perfect. That is the peaceful dwelling-place of those whose warfare has been accomplished. Strange as the notion is, war itself is commonly supposed to have first began in heaven. The dragon, as the old serpent, the Devil and Satan, is supposed to have been created an angel of light, and to have rebelled, and disputed the sovereignty of heaven with Him who made it. Such a fancy may do for epic poetry; but it is far too wild for sober truth. So far as this idea may be supposed to have had a Scripture origin, it has been derived from a wrong interpretation. There is no authority for it in the Word of truth. Satan is indeed more than once spoken of as having been cast down from heaven. The Lord saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven. But neither in that nor in this case are we to understand that to be the heaven of angels. It is that which was composed of those who remained in the world of spirits previous to the Last Judgment, who

congregated there, and formed themselves into communions, which they regarded as their heaven, as being a condition which afforded them the means of enjoyment suited to their state. What that heaven was may be imagined from the heaven which men of similar character form for themselves on earth. There are persons who are indifferent and even inwardly opposed to religion, who yet live in Christian society, and engage in all the external rites and services of the church, and who are even liberal in their aid to religious purposes. These are the tares among the wheat. They are so like them that they cannot readily be distinguished from them. Yet they will be separated in the judgment. In the meantime, it is allowed them to live in peace, so long as they outwardly conform to the existing condition of things, which does not require that the seeming should be separated from the real. So long as consociations are formed on outward semblances, these imaginary heavens can exist, but when consociations are formed on inward similitudes, as they are in heaven and in hell, the imaginary heavens vanish, and are rolled up as a scroll, and new heavens are formed wherein only the righteous can dwell. These fictitious and imaginary heavens are those in which there was war. It was there where Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. That which is here spoken of is not a war of arms but of principles, a conflict between good and evil, truth and falsity. Michael and his angels, who maintain the cause of the woman, represent the same principles, the doctrine of the Lord and the doctrine of life, which are those of the true church; while the dragon and his angels represent the doctrines of a divided Godhead and of faith alone, as those of the church of which the Lord has said, "Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband."

These doctrines are necessarily antagonistic. Those who maintain the doctrine of salvation by faith assert that all religious graces and virtues are included in faith, and flow from it as acts of faith, and no doubt many who believe in the all-sufficiency of faith do the works of love also. But the great evil is, that this faith has a tendency to lead away from everything but faith, or to make that of little or no importance. This conflict first commenced in the spiritual world, and was there continued till the dragon was cast out. The dragon prevailed not. The active power of principles is determined by the general condition of things. During the decline of a church the equilibrium between good and evil, and consequently between heaven and hell, is disturbed; and this continues and increases so long as the church

continues to decline. Nothing can arrest its downward progress but a final judgment, which brings it to an end, when a new church is established both in the spiritual and in the natural world. The last time of the old and the first of the new, which is a time of transition, is a time of conflict. It is then that Michael and his hosts fight against the dragon and his hosts. And the nature of the result is determined by the nature of the times. When old things are passing away and all things are becoming new, evil and error cannot prevail, however numerous the hosts that contend for them. Their power is gone, or what is the same, a greater power than theirs comes against them. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera, when the hosts of Israel are faithful to their God. So are the dragon and his angels overcome, and by the same powers, the truths of heaven, when the church above unites with the church below to protect the truth from the assaults of those who would destroy it. The dragon and his angels prevailed not: neither was their place found any more in heaven. The heaven in which they fought was itself abolished. By means of the fictitious heavens which the draconic spirits had formed, they had, indeed, been able to disturb the heaven of angels; but when their place was no more found in the heaven which they themselves had built up, the cause of disturbance was removed.

9. A further result of the victory of Michael over the enemies of the woman and her child is now stated. *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* The dragon is now called also the Devil and Satan. These names are now applied to the dragon, not because he has changed his character, but because the conflict has further disclosed it. The dragon is now cast out of heaven to the earth. So far as this is descriptive of the process of judgment, it means the fall of those who had built for themselves fictitious heavens to the earth of the world of spirits. It is called the earth, because it is like the earth in this respect; it is neither heaven nor hell, but is in the midst between them. When we look into the causes of things, we find that this casting out and casting down is descriptive of a descent from a higher to a lower state. Indeed, the process of judgment itself, as we have said, is a process of unfolding and disclosing, according to the Lord's words—"Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the housetops." The act of judgment is nothing but the last result of the unfolding process, which places

them either in heaven or hell, according to their own real state of good or evil. The casting of the dragon down to the earth does not mean his final judgment. This is described in the twentieth chapter. The earth to which he was cast down is, we have seen, the lower part of the world of spirits, analogous to the earth in the natural world. In an extended sense he may be said to have been cast down into the earth of the natural world also ; for whatever takes place in that part of the spiritual world, produces corresponding effects in the natural world, with which it is in immediate connection. In its application to individuals, heaven and earth, as we have had frequent occasion to remark, mean the internal and external man. The heaven where Michael fought with the dragon does not however correspond to the internal, which is the home of heavenly affections and thoughts ; for no evil or warfare can enter there, as none can enter the angelic heaven to which it corresponds. That in man which answers to the imaginary heaven, where Michael and the dragon met in conflict, is the internal of the external man, the seat of his natural affections and thoughts, desires and imaginations. This is where the natural man builds his imaginary heaven. Here his will freely cherishes its natural desires, under the influence of which his imagination forms an ideal, and indulges in visions of happiness, which have only to be realized to satisfy all the cravings of his nature, and make life a perpetual feast. To youth such day-dreams are natural and harmless ; but when they are pursued as possibilities in actual life, they cease to be harmless illusions and become dangerous errors. This imaginary heaven, which every one at some period of his life builds for himself, is not only analogous to, but is really the origin of the imaginary heaven reared by the practical adherents of salvation by faith alone. For are not all our natural ideals and visions of happiness built more or less on faith without works ? All strive as far as possible to escape what they believe to be the curse of sin, to eat their bread in the sweat of their face. To seek the means of life in the fruit of patient labour seems always to have been the result of necessity rather than choice. The shortest and easiest way to wealth or greatness has been the common aim and the common infirmity of human nature in all times. Wars of conquest and schemes of spoliation, the gambling table and the lottery office, are extreme, but by no means mere ideal, modes of hastening to be rich without productive labour, and many of the more refined and legitimate modes of gain spring from the same passion. In fact, faith without works is the natural creed of the natural man. Is it surprising

that he should be inclined to carry his creed from the affairs of this life into those of the life to come? If he is naturally disposed, and tries to attain temporal happiness by the shortest and easiest way, is it unreasonable to suppose that he will be naturally inclined to seek eternal happiness on the same easy terms? And here he is more likely to rest in his delusion, at least until the day of final delusion; for religion does not show the same outward obstacles as the world presents to a life of faith without works. Religious duties must be done from choice and not mere necessity. Yet the whole teaching and economy of God tells us that all religion has relation to life. The Lord leads His people to His kingdom, not by the shortest and easiest, but by the safest and surest way; not through the land of the Philistines because it is near, but through the wilderness of the Red Sea (Ex. xiii. 17); not through faith alone, which that land represented, but through the wilderness of self-denial and patient labour, where they will receive the law of life, and learn to obey it—the opposite of the error of justification by faith alone; for salvation is obtained through faith in Jesus Christ as the only God and by a life according to His commandments. This truth is Michael, the opponent and conqueror of the dragon. And whoever opens his mind to the reception of this heavenly truth will experience the same result. But the dragon, so far as the record of the conflict goes, was as yet not entirely overcome and removed, but only cast down from heaven to the earth. Error and evil are first removed from the inner man, and afterwards from the outer man; first from the motives, and then from the life. Their removal from the external man is complete deliverance. This is the judgment which casts the dragon into the burning lake.

10. Although the casting down of the dragon is not a complete deliverance from his power, still his removal from the heaven, where he had been so formidable as to sweep the stars from the firmament, opened the communication which he had closed between the angelic heaven and those who were waiting for the kingdom of God, both in the world of spirits and in the church on earth. Happy will it be for those whose choice leads them not only to see but to combat this delusive principle of faith alone during their life in the world. This can only be done by opening the mind to the reception of the truth. Therefore when the dragon and his angels were cast out of heaven into the earth, John says, *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down,*

which accused them before our God day and night. God and His Christ are the Lord's Essential Divinity and His Divine Humanity. When these are acknowledged in the church, the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ are come. In the church, means, indeed, in the minds of men; for the church, or kingdom of God, has no abstract existence, nor has it a general, further than it has a particular, existence. When this is our own case, we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Or, as the Lord Himself expresses it, "I in them, and Thou in Me." The Lord dwells with the faithful; but He dwells not in their faith, but in their love. They receive Him through faith, but they receive Him in love. "God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Faith gives presence; love gives conjunction. Those who ascribe salvation to faith and deny it to love, are the accusers of the brethren; for, in the Word, brethren mean those who are united by love to the Lord and to each other. Abstractly considered, brethren mean the love which unites the members of the church in the common bond of Christian brotherhood. Love unites all; faith divides all. Those who make love the first essential of their religion dwell together in unity, even when they differ on matters of faith; and where they are so united the church is one, however various and far apart its members may be. Those who make faith the first essential of their religion are necessarily divided; for every section of the church believes that its faith is the only true one; and some go so far as to hold that there is no salvation in any other. Those also accuse the brethren before God who deny that love is the first essential of religion and the primal condition of salvation, and that it saves by means of truth, which the Divine name, God, signifies. And to accuse them day and night is to be in this negation constantly.

11. Those whom the dragon accused, *overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.* The blood of the Lamb, as we have seen (chap. v. 9), has a deep and holy meaning. The Lord's blood, in the natural sense, means His sufferings and death. It was through death that the Lord overcame him that had the power of death. Yet death does not here mean natural but spiritual death. The Devil was not the cause of natural death; nor was it from this death that the Lord came to deliver us. He came to deliver us from spiritual death. His own death was not natural death only, it involved spiritual death also. In His death the Lord laid down, not only the life of the material body, but the life also of the fallen humanity which He had assumed.

This was the death by which He overcame him who had the power of death. But the issue of the Lord's death was life. He laid down His life that He might take it again. Not the same life. He laid down the life He inherited from His human mother with all its human infirmities, and took the life of His Divine Father with all its Divine perfections. All this is included in the meaning of His blood. It was therefore by the blood, not of a dead but of a living Saviour, that the faithful Michael and his angels overcame the dragon and his angels. Nor did they overcome merely by what the Lord Himself had suffered and done. The Lord laid down His life and took it again, that we might lay down our life and take it again. It is in doing this that we conquer. Without self-conquest there is no victory for the Christian. It is therefore said of those who overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, "And they loved not their lives unto the death." They themselves had, like their Lord, laid down their life. There is this difference. The Lord laid down His maternal life, that He might take His own Divine life. The faithful lay down their own life that they may take His life. It is His life in them that enables them to overcome. His life in them is the life of love and truth. The life of His truth is distinctively meant by His blood, as the life of His love is by His flesh. And His disciples are required to eat His flesh and drink His blood; for otherwise they have no life in them. Truth, as thus received, and as it exists in the mind as a living principle, is that by which the faithful overcome. It then also becomes the word of their testimony. It has the testimony of their own experience, of their life's love, faith, and obedience. The blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony are the combined means of overcoming. Whether or not, therefore, these conquerors of the dragon had been martyrs in the flesh, they at least must have been martyrs in the spirit.

12. When the dragon was cast down, the cry went forth, *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* The angels rejoice in all that regards the salvation of men. They rejoiced at the birth of the Saviour, one of whose coming works was, to cast Satan down from the eminence he had usurped, both in the spiritual world and in the minds of men. Similar conditions existed at the time of the Lord's Second Advent; therefore similar deliverances and similar rejoicings. But that which was a cause of joy to the angels in heaven was, in this case, a cause of woe to the

inhabiters of the earth. The dragon was cast out of heaven; not yet, however, removed from the earth of the middle state. The earth and the sea, the case of whose inhabitants is lamented, are the earth and sea which are afterwards said to have passed away, and are the habitations of those in the middle state who, doctrinally and practically, are principled in a lifeless faith; those more and less confirmed in it being meant by the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea. The Devil's great wrath is said to arise from his having but a short time. Time in the spiritual world, and therefore in the spiritual sense of the Word, signifying state, the shortness of his time means the certainty of the state that awaits the evil. And the nearer the evil come to their last and final state, the greater is their wrath, because the more entirely evil does their state become. This is very expressively indicated in the case of this enemy of the church. While in heaven, he was called the dragon; when cast out he is spoken of as that old serpent called the Devil and Satan; and here he is called simply the Devil. He is afterwards indeed named the serpent and the dragon; but this is in reference to the circumstances in which he appears, and in connection with which he is mentioned.

13, 14. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.* Disappointed in his expectation of devouring the child, the dragon now persecutes the woman. The child was caught up to God and His throne; and the way to it was defended against the destroyer by Michael and his angels. The doctrine is safe, but the church is yet exposed to danger. We see in this a repetition of what took place in the world in the early times of Christianity. Herod attempted to devour the Man-child as soon as He was born. And when, after His resurrection, He was taken up into heaven and unto the throne of God, the Jews persecuted the church, as the dragon does here. The same plan of defence that the Lord then recommended is now adopted: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." The woman receives two wings of a great eagle, that she may fly into the wilderness. She experiences, though by another instrumentality, the wish expressed by the tried and wearied soul: "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness" (Ps. lv. 6, 7). The wings of the eagle are

given instead of the wings of the dove. These were the wings on which the Lord carried His church into the wilderness from the persecution of Pharaoh: “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself” (Ex. xix. 4). The eagles’ wings are the emblems of an intellectual faith, as opposed to a blind faith, a faith guided by spiritual intelligence, as the eagle’s flight is guided by his piercing eye. Pharaoh, who is called a dragon, endeavoured to devour the male children of the Hebrew mothers, and was himself defeated through Moses, the man-child, who had escaped his barbarous decree. Wings, the beautiful emblems of a heaven-directed faith, the faith of truth from love, are given to the woman, to instruct us that to His church the Lord gives the truth that defends, and the faith that bears her away from the presence and power of her enemies. But what and where was the wilderness to which the woman was to fly? The religious world was then in a wilderness state. Yet there were in it those who formed the remnant that was to be saved; among whom the woman was to find a retreat, where she might be nourished, away from the face of the serpent, for a time, times, and half a time—till the old dispensation had come to a complete end, and the new had made an actual beginning. Before the church can have an outward existence in the world, her principles must first have an inward reception in some minds; and only when their faith and their numbers have sufficiently increased can they exist in communion, as a body constituting the visible church. It is among these that the woman finds a place.

15, 16. When she flew into the wilderness, *the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.* Out of the mouth of the wicked come evil thoughts and all uncleanness; for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. When these are directed against the church or its principles, they come forth as reasonings. And those who are sensual—and such are especially meant by the serpent, can reason plausibly against the truth, and often persuasively in favour of error, since all are naturally inclined to favour whatever appeals to the senses. Such reasonings come in like a flood, and threaten to drown true reason, and sweep away its barriers and obliterate its landmarks. In this case the woman might have been carried away of the flood, but *the earth helped the woman.* A distinction is now made between the wilderness and the earth. Even when the fallen church is a wilderness, it is not wholly waste. There

are oases in the desert, where the pilgrim is refreshed. The earth in the wilderness that helped the woman, consists of those already spoken of who, though in the fallen church, are not of it: they are the remnant preserved in every time of destruction, among whom the new church finds refuge, nourishment, and defence. These are they who, while the many receive the Word by the wayside, in stony places, and among thorns, have the good ground of an honest heart, which at once receives and cherishes the truth, and neutralizes all opposing errors. Like the good ground of an honest heart, the earth that helped the woman is, in the abstract sense, the principle of goodness, and therefore signifies those who have preserved a principle of goodness in their hearts; while professing the doctrine of faith alone, they have not lived the life of faith alone, but the life of charity. These it is who swallow up the flood that the serpent casts out of his mouth. As the serpent casts the flood out of his mouth, the earth opens her mouth to receive it. The flood that comes out of the serpent's mouth is a flood of falsities, in the shape of reasonings in favour of that dogma which the serpent represents. This flood the earth swallows up, when those who have received the principles of the New Church give a reason of the hope that is in them. Reasons and reasonings, more properly ratiocinations, are very different from each other. Reasons belong to the understanding, reasonings belong to the imagination. Truth gives reasons, error supports itself by reasonings. Reasons swallow up reasonings, as the rod of Moses swallowed up the rods of the magicians, and as the disciples could drink any deadly thing without its hurting them. Thus the earth swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth, and helped the woman.

17. Though unable to destroy her, *the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* It is impossible to read this without being reminded of the first promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." We do not need to consider this as an especial fulfilment of the first promise. Similar circumstances occur at similar epochs. The old serpent returns, and the woman who is the object of his assault re-appears. Every new church in its beginning has the serpent principle to contend with. The spiritual and heavenly are always opposed by the sensual and earthly. The church is opposed by the world. This is the constantly recurring conflict. The first church fell in the conflict;

the last overcomes. The serpent of the second Eden, like that of the first, labours to destroy the woman ; and when he fails in the attempt, he makes war against her seed. The seed of the woman are, personally considered, the members of the church, who are her sons and daughters. Considered abstractly, the woman's seed are the principles of truth, or of faith, for these are the seed of the church in the minds of the faithful. But the true members of the true church do not hold the truth as a matter of faith only ; they practise the truth, and prize it for its usefulness in guiding the life. Therefore the woman's seed are said to keep the commandments of God, and to have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Faith in the Lord and a life according to His commandments, are thus the characteristics of the true members of the Lord's church. And when we consider that the dragon is an image of those who maintain a Tri-personal God and salvation by faith alone, we can see the cause of the serpent's hatred of the woman, and of his making war against the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. The remnant of her seed are those of whom we have spoken as the remnant of the former church, amongst whom the woman found a place, and who, by receiving her principles, have become her children.

The concluding part of this chapter involves a question of deep interest and of great importance. Will the New Church, which the woman represents, have a separate existence as an ecclesiastical body ? or will she only exist in the minds of those who receive and nourish her, and extend her influence silently and invisibly, until she make the churches of this world the churches, or rather the church, of our Lord and of His Christ ? Perhaps this is one of those questions we try to settle, which may safely be left to settle themselves. Future generations will not consider themselves bound to act according to our theories. One use of forming some opinion on the question is, to guide our own practice at the present time. Every recipient of the principles of the New Church must earnestly pray that they may gradually permeate all existing churches, and ameliorate, and if possible change, all existing systems. But while they pray for this, and rejoice that there are signs of its commencement and progress, they may, we believe, in perfect consistency with the catholicity of the principles of the New Jerusalem, form themselves into an ecclesiastical body, and call that body the visible church. We believe, indeed, that the present part of the prophecy sanctions, if it does not directly teach this. But this belief may be held and

acted upon without any spirit of sectarianism ; but with the perfect and joyful conviction that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every church, as in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. In this chapter we have an account of two beasts, one of which rose out of the sea, and the other out of the earth. These singular creatures are not only connected with the dragon, but they represent him ; for he acts through them as his instruments, having given to the first beast, and through him to the second, his power, and his seat, and great authority. As the persecution of the woman's seed is still continued, and is now carried on by these two beasts, we may regard them as the seed of the serpent opposed to the seed of the woman. Exercising the power of the dragon, they symbolize the same principle still further developed and more openly manifested. As the seed of the woman are those who receive and maintain the principles of the true church, the two beasts are those who hold and maintain the principles of the false church—of that branch of it at least of which this part of the vision treats. The beast which rose out of the sea represents those who receive the draconic principles more externally or superficially ; and the beast which rose out of the earth represents those who receive them more internally or deeply. This arises from the meaning, previously explained, of the sea and the earth. The two beasts, therefore, represent the laity and the clergy, or the doctrine as it is received by them ; for the clergy enter more deeply than the laity into the principles of their religious faith. But the Word treats not so much of persons as of principles. This is congenial to the spirit of religion, as it is to the spirit of the Word. It is important for all to know the character of principles ; but it is not important that they should know the character of those who hold them. Indeed, no one can know this but the Lord, who alone knows the heart. We who only look upon the outward appearance cannot know the interior, and therefore the real, character of any one. This is wisely hidden from us in the present life, which is a life of probation, during which all are left in spiritual freedom, so that they may freely think and feel, and therefore freely choose, which they could not do if all their inward

thoughts and feelings were known to those around them. The inward character of others being thus concealed from us, we should neither look into it nor judge of it. On the other hand, it is not only lawful for us, but incumbent upon us, to know and judge of principles. In judging of these we offend against no law of charity; rather, if we judge justly, we discharge one of its highest duties, by seeing for ourselves and showing to others where the path of safety and the path of danger lie. Yet we are so much disposed to identify our opinions with ourselves, that it is difficult for us to hear their soundness impeached without regarding it as a personal imputation. Would we could all speak the truth in love, and could all hear it without offence! Viewing the present subject in respect to principles and not to persons, we proceed to consider the meaning of the vision of the two beasts.

As the dragon re-appears under these two mystic forms, we are to regard them as representing the two means and instrumentalities by which the draconic principle is supported. Religious principles are supported especially by reason and Scripture. Truth has the support of sound reason and the true meaning of Scripture; error can be supported by false reason and the apparent sense of Scripture.

The appearance of the first beast is so much like that of the dragon, that we need only attend to the points of difference between them. Both had seven heads and ten horns; but the dragon had seven crowns upon his heads, while the beast had ten crowns upon his horns. Crowns or diadems, we have seen, are truths from the Word. Diadems upon the head mean truths from the Word in the mind; but diadems on the horns mean truths from the Word put forth for the purpose of proving and convincing. Instead of the seven diadems which the dragon had on his heads, the beast had on his heads the name or names of blasphemy. The meaning is essentially the same. Seven is a holy number; and seven diadems mean holy truths from the Word. But on the head of the dragon these truths are profaned; and the profanation of truth is blasphemy; the difference being, that this expression indicates a more open and complete violation of holy truth than the others. There were seven crowns on the dragon; there were ten on the beast; this number being expressive of abundance, now brought forth to maintain the tenet which the beast himself represents.

2. But something more is required to complete the description of this beast, and through him of the dogma which he represents. *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.* Beautiful

in appearance but fierce in disposition, the leopard presents the image of a doctrine that is pleasing to the senses but dangerous to the soul. Its spotted skin is a fit emblem of the mixture of truth and error in a scheme which at once vindicates and impeaches the Divine justice, by making it so pure that none can satisfy it; and which exalts and debases the Divine law, by making it so perfect that none can fulfil it. The beast has also a bear's feet and a lion's mouth. The bear is emblematical of the literal sense of the Word, the lowest truths of which are meant by its feet. These are apparent truths, such as speak of God as being angry and vindictive, and yet as being easily won over to clemency and forgiveness. On such truths the scheme of substituted punishment and pardon rests. The mouth of the lion proclaims, with too much power, the marvellous beauty of the scheme of salvation, which reconciles the otherwise conflicting attributes of justice and mercy, and opens the door of hope to otherwise doomed and lost sinners. To such a form of the doctrine *the dragon gave his power, and his seat, and great authority.* The power, the rule, and authority of a principle pass into the creed or doctrinal form which embodies and represents it.

3. But notwithstanding the power and authority the beast derived from the dragon, *one of his heads was wounded to death.* Such a wound must have been inflicted by "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." And what is the teaching of the Word which inflicts this deadly wound on the doctrine of salvation by faith alone? It is its teaching respecting the necessity of good works. Not to mention the Old Testament, which is entirely set aside as the covenant of works, opposed to and abrogated by the New Testament, as the covenant of grace, we need only mention the Lord's declaration that He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; His answer to the young man, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commands;" and the repeated assurance that we are to be judged according to our works. These do indeed give a deathblow to the doctrine that we are saved by faith without works. If the doctrine is to survive, this death-wound must be healed. And we are told that *his deadly wound was healed.* And how was it healed? By so explaining the teaching of Scripture on this all-important point as to remove the declared antagonism of works to faith. The Lord did not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law; but He came to fulfil it Himself in our stead, and so relieve us from its penalties, and from its obligations as a condition of salvation. The Lord taught the necessity of keeping the commandments; but He taught this to a Jew, who was under the law. As to being judged by

our works, this is rather more difficult to explain, or explain away. Unlike the Solifidians of the early Christian church, those of recent times do not deny the obligations of the moral law. They deny it indeed as a condition of salvation ; but admit it as an evidence of faith. We are justified by our faith, but judged by our works as the evidences of our faith. Wesley had a theory on this subject, that we are justified by our faith, but rewarded according to our works. It might be a perplexing question to those who believe in deathbed repentance, In what case would a penitent be who had faith but had no works? Such reasonings and expositions on the most vital of all subjects have so satisfied minds predisposed to admit them, that we need not be surprised to find that *all the world wondered after the beast.*

4. Satisfied with his claims, *they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast : and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?* To worship the dragon is to acknowledge the principle; to worship the beast is to acknowledge the tenet. Were not the principle behind the dogma, it would have no power over the mind. To have such power, a doctrine must express the heart's inclination and the mind's secret thought. Scruples and doubts may arise ; but, when these have been removed, confidence in the soundness of a dogma is increased, so well expressed by the exclamation of his admirers. There is no doctrine like that which relieves the religious life from so galling a yoke as the yoke of the law; and who can gainsay the arguments by which it is supported ?

5, 6. The doings of the beast are consistent with his character. *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies ; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.* Agreeably to the name of blasphemy written on his heads, he perverts the truths of the Word. And he does this so successfully that power is given him to continue forty and two months. The constantly recurring number which, however expressed, resolves itself into three and a half, tells us that the power of the dogmas he represents will continue till the end of the old and the beginning of the new. Having this power, *he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.* The dogma he represents perverts the teaching of the Word, by denying the unity of God and the Divinity of His Humanity, meant by God and His Name ; and when these essential truths are perverted, so are those respecting the doctrine and worship of the church, meant by the tabernacle, and the principles that constitute

heaven, meant by them that dwell therein. The true doctrine and worship of the church are the doctrine and worship of God in Christ; and the constituent principles of heaven are faith in Him and love to Him. The union of these constitute heaven as a state; and those only in whom these unitedly exist can dwell in heaven as a place.

7. From uttering unholy words the beast proceeds to the doing of unholy deeds. *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.* Abstractly considered, the saints are the holy truths of the church. Falsity makes war against truths when it opposes itself to them. Direct and open war is never made against the truths of the Word by those who belong to the church. All profess to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. But war against them may be no less real that it is waged in their name. And the more conscientious those who engage in such a warfare, the more dangerous they are. Those who have overcome the saints by overcoming the holy truths of the Word, or those truths of the Word that teach holiness of life as a condition of salvation, are no doubt able to some extent to overcome the saints themselves; for there is a seductive power in that which appears at once consistent with the teaching of Scripture, and agreeable to the natural desires of the heart. The prevalence of the doctrine is evidently meant by the power given to the beast over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8, 9. But the prevalence of the doctrine, wide as it is, is only among a certain class. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* The earth, as in all other instances, meaning the church, those who dwell in it are its members, or those who profess its faith. But here is the comforting assurance, that not all who profess this, or indeed any other erroneous faith, are its worshippers, but only those of them that are not written in the Lamb's book of life; and all are written in His book of life whose lives are in agreement with the teaching of His book, however mistaken their views may be on matters of faith. Those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life are the evil; and all are included in this number who, however true may be the doctrines they profess to believe, live to the world and the flesh. Error by itself does not condemn; truth by itself does not save. Nay, error palliates evil; truth aggravates it. So, with the evil, error makes the condemnation less, while truth makes the condemnation greater. The Lamb is said to have

been slain from the foundation of the world. This is commonly understood to mean that the Lord's death was foreseen and provided from the foundation of the world. No doubt it was. But the spiritual meaning is that which we are to take. As in this sense the world means the church, the foundation of the world means the foundation of the church; and as slaying the Lamb means a denial of the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world means the denial of this Divine truth from the establishment of the church. This does not mean from the first establishment of the Christian church, but from the establishment of that which now claims to be the church. Both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Church regard the Lord's Humanity as being indeed Spiritual, but not Divine, therefore finite and limited to one part of space. The glory of Christianity is the Omnipresence of the Humanity of Jesus Christ, that is, the Omnipresence of the Lord in His Humanity. It is His Humanity that brings Him savingly near to us. His Glorified Humanity is the very embodiment of all the virtues of His life and death. It has all saving power in heaven and in earth. The importance of attending to and understanding the subject of this part of the prophecy is intimated by what is said to those to whom it is addressed: *If any man have an ear, let him hear.* The ear meaning not only the faculty of understanding, but the inclination to learn and to obey that which the truth teaches, to have an ear and to hear are more necessary in this instance, in which the eternal interests of the soul are deeply concerned.

10. The consequences of the doctrine to those who are practically in it are described by an expressive figure. *He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword.* Error leads into captivity when it deceives the understanding; it kills when it corrupts the heart. The true law of retaliation is here also laid down. Every spiritual injury that any one inflicts upon another returns upon himself. Every false and every evil principle has its punishment within it. He who rushes into falsehood and evil, rushes into their consequences. As goodness and truth are heaven and happiness, so evil and falsehood are hell and misery. But it is added, *Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.* The saints are those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. They are not seduced, but they are tried. When error and evil prevail in the church, those who are not led away are nevertheless tempted to follow a multitude to believe error and do evil, and have to resist the tide that carries others along. When

predicting the very times to which these prophecies relate, the Lord exhorted His disciples, saying, "In your patience possess ye your souls." Patience is endurance in trial and temptation. And these temptations confirm the faith, while they exercise the patience, of those who endure them.

11. But the other symbolic form of this faith now claims our attention. *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake like a dragon.* We have said that those two beasts represent the draconic principle, as it unfolds itself among the simple and the wise, or those who enter more superficially and those who enter more deeply into the reasons and evidences of the faith, therefore among the laity and among the clergy. They constitute what may be called the external and internal members of the body. The beast which now appears has only two distinguishing marks; he has two horns like a lamb, and he speaks like a dragon.

It is not indeed said of this beast that he was like a lamb, as it said of the other that he was like a leopard; but it is not unreasonable to believe that he simulated the character of the lamb, as well as assumed the semblance of his power, of which horns are the emblems. The lamb, whose character he simulated, and by whose power he professed to do his wonders, is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. All religious teachers, in the exercise of their office, claim to be ambassadors for Christ, and set forth reconciliation with God and salvation from sin as the end of their teaching. But those represented by the dragon and his beasts teach not only the reconciliation of man to God, but the reconciliation of God to man. But what was the teaching of the apostles as ambassadors for Christ? It was this: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God" (2 Cor. v. 19, 20). Nothing is said here of Christ reconciling God to the world, nor even of Christ reconciling the world to God; but only of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

But the apostle follows up this singularly clear statement with another, which is supposed to teach the vicarious nature of His atonement: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

The allusion here is to the sin-offering, which is sometimes called, as it is here, by the single name of sin. The meaning therefore is, that Jesus, sinless Himself, was made a sin-offering for us. But what did the sin-offering mean? The common notion is, that in a sin-offering God accepted the death of the animal instead of the sinner's, as an atonement for the sin he had committed. In agreement with this view, Christ is believed to have been made a sin-offering, by His death being accepted as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. In this there is some truth, with a large admixture of error. In the offerings of the Jewish Church there was no idea of substituted punishment. The Jewish sacrifice was indeed both a symbol of the sacrifice of the worshipper and a type of the sacrifice of Christ; but in neither did the sacrifice consist in the death of the offering. In the Jewish ritual, the death of the animal was necessary to its becoming a sacrifice, but the sacrifice itself consisted in its being offered on the altar, when, consumed by the holy fire, the smoke of the offering ascended before God as a sweet savour. The sacrifice of the animal was a symbol of the sacrifice of the worshipper; and the worshipper offers himself as a sacrifice when he devotes himself to God, "I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). In a more particular way, he sacrifices himself to God when he offers up to God his purified affections and thoughts, for these are, in the best sense, himself; and these were represented by the animals, without spot or blemish, offered on the altar. So the Psalmist says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. li. 17). And the epistle to the Hebrews says: "By Him therefore let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually. But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (xiii. 15, 16). Of the same character was the sacrifice of Christ, "who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14). His, indeed, was the sacrifice of all sacrifices. It was the perfect consecration of perfected humanity to His own eternal Godhead. It was the great antitype of all the Jewish sacrifices, and is the perfect archetype of all Christian sacrifice. Its end, as the writer of the epistle of the Hebrews concludes, was to "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (ix. 14).

It is but justice to those who hold that doctrine of vicarious sacrifice to say, that they do not speak of the death of Christ as a punishment

that was pleasing to God, but as a terrible necessity, to vindicate His offended justice and outraged law. Divine mercy, it is said, desired to forgive sinners, but could not. God could not be merciful to a whole race of offenders without being unjust, and thus bringing both His justice and His law into contempt. We do not object to the principle that the justice of God required satisfaction, and His law reparation. What we object to is the idea that the justice of God could be satisfied with substituted punishment, and His law with substituted obedience. This is an impeachment of Divine justice far more injurious than any sin that a man could commit. It is a violation of the very first principles of justice. It is polluting the stream at its source; and carrying its impure waters, not only into the whole system of God's spiritual government, but into the whole of men's notions of their spiritual relation and duty to God. It may be said that this is an infidel objection. The objection itself is just; to Christians belong the reproach of having put it in the power of infidels to make it. How could it have entered into the heart of man to conceive and utter such a "blasphemy against God" as this? But this name is plainly written on the head of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, a doctrine founded on the very principle that God has visited upon His innocent Son the blood of His guilty creatures. Truly the beast that rose out of the earth, while it has the horns of a lamb, speaks like a dragon. Who but the old serpent could prompt men to think and teach such a sentiment as this?

We have admitted the claim of Divine justice to satisfaction. It may therefore be demanded, Who is to satisfy its demands? So far as it can be satisfied at all, it must be satisfied by him who offends against it. By no other than the sinner himself can reparation be made. This may be considered presumptuous; but it is true nevertheless. It may seem presumptuous to those who have been accustomed to hear of the absolutely unforgiving nature of Divine justice and the inviolableness of the Divine law; and of the utter inability of sinners to satisfy their demands. But this elaborate system is not Divine but human. Having had its origin in the natural inclinations of the human heart, it has, like the dragon and his beasts, passed through several stages of development, until it has reached its present state. Yet there is no ground for the assertion that God ever required perfect obedience from imperfect beings, as all created beings are; nor is there any for the notion that God cannot forgive sin without full satisfaction; least of all is there any for the idea that God's law and justice can be satisfied by punishing the

innocent instead of the guilty. The inviolable law of Divine justice is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 20). Not less inviolable is the law, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (ver. 21). Justice can be satisfied only by the sinner's ceasing from sin and doing righteousness. Every one must do this for himself, not indeed by his own strength, but by the Spirit of the Lord. In no other way can the justice of God be satisfied than by our becoming just. No Divine attribute can be satisfied except by implanting itself in our hearts and minds, so as to make us "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4). The one end and aim of religion is to make the character of man an image of the character of God. Religion can require nothing more than this, and it can be satisfied with nothing less; for nothing less can secure human happiness in time or in eternity. God is infinitely happy, because He is infinitely good and wise; and only so far as we partake of His goodness and wisdom can we partake of His happiness. No vicarious satisfaction, either by suffering or by righteousness, can effect this transformation of the human character; but the idea that it can may seriously prevent it, by inducing a false confidence, or a confidence in what is false. We shall see how much this has been the case with regard to the doctrine we are now considering, as represented by the second beast.

12. Of the second beast it is said that *he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.* The dragon gave all his power to the first beast, and the first gave all his power to the second; that is, the dragon exercised his power by the first beast, and then by the second through the first. Every heresy arises and proceeds in its development in this wise. First it springs up as a principle in the heart, then it is formed by false reasonings in the understanding, and finally it is confirmed by a false interpretation of the Scriptures. Such is the progress of the doctrine, the last stage of which is described here. The particular characteristic of this beast is, that he not only exercises the power, but acts entirely in the interests, of the former one. The former beast represents the doctrine as supported by reasonings; this beast represents the doctrine as confirmed by Scripture. On religious subjects men employ reason to interpret Scripture, and employ Scripture to confirm reason. That is to say, they employ Scripture to confirm their own interpretation of Scripture. Where then is the difference

between the true teacher and the false? The true teacher seeks to find the mind of God in Scripture; the false teacher seeks to find his own. And having found this, he is at no loss to prove it to the satisfaction of those, at least, who are willing to take the law at his mouth, or who, in the study of the subject, follow the same course as he has pursued. When a system is once formed, those who adopt it look at all the Scriptures through it, and therefore see it in them all. The first thus entering into the second, the second exercises all the power of the first. The second also causes all to worship the first. The object of proving a doctrine by Scripture is to obtain for it the consent of the religious world. In this the second beast was singularly successful; for "he causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." In the general sense, the earth is the church, and those that dwell therein are its members. But viewed abstractly, the earth and them which dwell therein, mean the church and the principles of goodness and truth of which it consists. When these are brought into conformity with, and are made to confirm and exalt, the doctrine of faith alone, the earth and those therein worship the beast, whose death-wound was healed. This, and a further reference to the first beast having been wounded to death and healed, supplies an additional reason for the mission of the other; for the testimony of the Word to the saving efficacy of good works is so repeated and direct, that, however explained away, it can never be entirely silenced, but by making all the other principles of the church and graces of religion bow down to the single principle and grace of Faith.

13-15. John describes how the second beast carried out his commission to support the authority of the first. *And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.* The Scriptures record instances of the true prophet, but no instance of a false prophet, bringing down fire from heaven. The prophets of Baal attempted to do this but failed (1 Kings xix.). This mystic beast was to do a greater wonder than any actual deceiver had done before him. That which the true teacher brings down from heaven is the fire of disinterested love; the fire of sectarian love is that which the false teacher brings down. Sectarian love is the love of doctrine and of those who favour it. And we know what alienations, divisions,

and enmities this has produced in the world. The nature of the fire is evident from the purpose for which it was brought down. Its purpose, as we learn, was to deceive. There are, as formerly observed, two ways of deceiving, by persuading and by convincing. Persuasion appeals to the affections of the will, and through them to the thoughts of the understanding. This is the kind of appeal which is to be understood by bringing down fire from heaven. The fire of sectarian love appeals to the affections, with the view of kindling in them the same fire of sectarian love. Yet this fire comes down in the sight of men, and sight relates to the understanding. Yes; but still this was done as a miracle, in order to deceive or to seduce the understanding. The very fact that this fire was brought as a miracle or sign, shows that it was intended to persuade rather than convince. Miracles do not teach; and are not intended, as they are not able, to convince. They impress the mind, and dispose it to listen to the truth, which alone carries conviction. This is the case with true miracles, such as those of our Lord, in which he brought down the fire of His Divine Love from heaven to earth in the sight of men. The imitative but counterfeit fire of the false prophet comes down from his own imaginary heaven to the earth of the natural man, and is intended to dispose the mind to receive his false teaching. But these great miracles were done not only in the sight of men but in the sight of the beast. The second beast did them in the sight of the first, because they were done to support his claim, and seduce men to worship him. They were also done to induce men to make an image of the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and was healed. A mental image is an intellectual conception, that which is reproduced as an idea and conviction in our own minds. The people made the image, and the beast inspired it with life. *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.* Every one must form some ideal image of what he is taught to believe; but the life or spirit which animates it comes either from heaven or from hell. The spirit of truth is from heaven, and is love; the spirit of error is from hell, and is hatred. We do not mean to say that all who are in religious error are inspired by hatred. Far from it. We only mean to say of error itself, that its own spirit is the opposite of the spirit of truth, and that so far as those who are in religious error are imbued with the spirit of their own error, they are in hatred. Providentially this is not always the case. Error may be in the understanding, without corrupting the heart; as truth

may be in the understanding without correcting the heart. There is this difference, however, between them. Truth, if it is followed, leads men in the right way; but error, if it is followed, leads them in a wrong way. The spirit which the beast gave to the image had the semblance of heavenly life; for the life which he infused into it was its seeming accordance with Scripture, which gave it the appearance of being alive, when yet it was dead. The spirit of this error is evidenced by the beast causing that all who would not render it worship should be killed. It is a characteristic of false religion to pronounce the sentence of eternal death on all who do not believe it. Anathema to all unbelievers has been the cry of all heretics since the pure doctrines of the Church of the Lord became corrupted.

16, 17. *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.* These different degrees and conditions of men being not natural but spiritual, small and great are those of less and of greater intelligence, rich and poor, those who have more and less knowledge, and free and bond, those who think for themselves and those who think from others. All these, therefore, men of all classes, must receive the mark of the beast in their right hands and foreheads. They must think and act in conformity with the faith of the church. Those who do not are not allowed to buy or sell. They must neither learn nor teach, unless it be in accordance with this faith. The character of this faith is meant by his mark, his name, and the number of his name. The mark, as a sort of hieroglyphic, includes all that the name expresses, and the name includes all that the number expresses, as a general principle contains particulars. The number is therefore the ultimate form and complete expression of all that the others contain. To this, therefore, we are directed, in order to discover and understand the character of the doctrine which the beast represents.

18. *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.* Many attempts have been made to explain the mystic number of this mystic beast. But those who have attempted to solve the mystery have misunderstood the meaning of the vision. How then could they explain that which forms so important a part of it? If they did not know what was represented by the beast, how could they know what is meant by the number of his name? The beast symbolizing the doctrine of faith alone, the number

of the beast expresses the character of that doctrine. What, then, is the meaning of this mystic number? We are instructed that the number can be counted, or the character of the dogma can be discerned, only by him that hath understanding. It does not mean that any person of intelligence may unfold the mystery. It means that only he who understands the subject of the prophecy can understand the meaning of its symbolic number. Numbers in the Word, as we have often remarked, do not mean quantity, but quality. To number or count a number is, therefore, to ascertain the quality or character of that which is numbered. The character, the quality of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, is expressed by the symbol 666. The meaning is expressed by the symbolic value of the number six, and the force of its meaning by the number six being three times repeated. Six is a number which expresses completeness. God is said to have finished or completed all His works in six days. Hence six days form our week of labour, which precedes our day of rest; and, in a higher sense, they express our states of probation and preparation in this world, to be followed by our eternal rest in the kingdom of heaven. To the faithful the six days are states of truth ending in a state of goodness, states of faith ending in a state of love. But the probationary days, which end in rest to the righteous, end in unrest to the wicked. Theirs are not states of truth and faith, ending in goodness and love, but states of falsity and faithlessness, ending in evil and hatred. These are the states meant by the mystical number of the name of the beast. Six is expressive of the completely erroneous character of the dogma of faith alone. It is the consummation of error, the negation and falsification of truth. And the nature or interior quality of this erroneous and pernicious dogma is still further unfolded by analyzing the number which expresses its general character. The number six is produced by the multiplication of two and three. Two is expressive of what is good, and three of what is true. Six, as the product of two and three, is expressive of the union of goodness and truth; consequently, in the opposite sense, of the union of evil and falsity. The union of goodness and truth constitutes religion, and what constitutes religion constitutes the church and heaven. The union of these two graces is the end of all the Divine works and gifts, of the creation and moral government of the world, of Revelation and Redemption. These can have no other end than the eternal happiness of the human race, and, as a means to that end, the perfecting of the human character by the union of the principles of goodness and truth. This union is the heavenly marriage, the anti-

type of the marriage to which the kingdom of heaven is likened. As all true religion promotes this union, all false religions tend to weaken and dissolve it, and to substitute for the union of goodness and truth the union of evil and falsity. The church, of which the present part of the Revelation treats, places salvation in faith alone. The exclusion of works from salvation has degraded the Divine laws to moral precepts ; and, by lowering the sanctions by which they are enforced in the Bible, has made them of secondary importance and obligation. This error contains many others, and among them one for which the scribes and Pharisees were condemned by our Lord : “ Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition ! ”

CHAPTER XIV.

1. IN prophecy, as in history, there are always two opposing elements, as in nature there are two opposing forces. From the beginning of Genesis, when the serpent appeared in Eden as the tempter of Eve, to the end of Revelation, when he is cast into the burning lake, there is a continual conflict between the powers of good and evil, of light and darkness. The powers themselves, considered as they are by creation, are not destructive of each other, or of order and happiness. On the contrary, like the opposing forces in nature, their equilibrium gives rise to peaceful and useful action. God and self, heaven and the world, reason and sense, spirit and matter are opposed to each other, but only as the two forces by which the planets are held in their orbits, and kept continually moving round the centre of their life and light. All things consist of an active and a passive, and are held together by action and reaction. Strictly speaking, it is true, there is but one active power in the universe, and that power is God. What we call the activity of the powers of nature is but the re-activity of the power of God. While all the power of acting is from God, re-action may be agreeable or contrary to order. Orderly action consists in working together with God ; disorderly action consists in working against Him. Man only is capable of disorderly action, for only he has free-will. In God we live and move ; and yet our life and action may be opposed to his. This possibility exists from the appearance that our life and our powers are our own. Without this appearance we could not act as rational beings ; we could

only act as we were acted upon ; like the inferior creatures, we should act from impulse and instinct, not from will and reason. The two opposing forces, of which we have spoken, exist in man and in all that proceeds from him ; and sometimes one and sometimes the other has the ascendancy. This is observable throughout the whole of this book. It is seen in the woman clothed with the sun, opposed by the dragon that waited to devour her man-child, and who endeavoured to destroy the woman herself, and afterwards persecuted the remnant of her seed. It is also seen in the rule exercised by the dragon and his two beasts over all that dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. That formed the dark side of the picture. Now the other and bright sight comes into view. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's Name written in their foreheads.* The company now seen with the Lamb are the hundred and forty and four thousand who had been sealed out of the tribes of Israel. The seal of the living God had preserved them from the seductive power of the dragon ; and now, when all the earth has come under his dominion, these spirits of the just appear on the holy hill of Zion, with the Lamb of God in their midst. In this vision, as in those prophecies in which the Saviour is spoken of as standing on Mount Zion, the spiritual idea is, that He is present with the church and its members in love. Of the two names by which the church is called, Jerusalem means the church in regard to her faith, and Zion the church in regard to her love. Those who appeared with the Lamb on Mount Sion are those who from love acknowledge the truth, that the Lord in His Divine Humanity is God alone. Their state of love is further described by the name of the Father being written in their foreheads. The Father is the Divine name, which is expressive of love ; and this name is written in the forehead when His love is inscribed in the heart, and rules in the mind.

2, 3. After John beheld these exalted ones, he *heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.* The heaven from which the voice and the song were heard, may be called the Christian heaven, being that which our Lord had formed of the just made perfect through His work of redemption in the world. The angels had sung at the time of the Lord's First

Advent. They now sing at the approach of His Second Advent and they rejoice at His triumph over the power of error and evil, and the deliverance of the faithful. Their voice is heard as the sound of many waters, symbolic of abounding truths; and as the sound of thunder, which is the symbol of goodness. But there was also the voice of music. Music is the language of the affections. First, there was the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and then the voice of song. The harps, like all stringed instruments, mean affections whose object is truth; the voice means affections whose object is goodness. The angels sung, as it were, a new song. We are not told what the theme of their song was. It no doubt resembled that which was afterwards sung by those mentioned in the next chapter who stood by the sea of glass. Enough to know that the song expressed the feelings and sentiments of the angelic hosts in relation to the Lord and to His redeemed ones, as they now stood upon Mount Zion. Theirs was a song, too, which the children of Zion, but no others, could learn. And when these sealed ones have come to learn that new song, they themselves will be angels, living in the New Heaven, from which the New Jerusalem is to descend.

4, 5. The character of these redeemed ones is next described. *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.* It hardly need be said that there is no reference here to the vestals of the heathen temples, and the nuns of the Romish Church. Both were the fruit of religious error and moral corruption. Not till marriage was regarded as sensual and earthly, was perpetual virginity esteemed as spiritual and heavenly. The symbolic virgin of Holy Scripture, though pure, is less perfect than the married wife. She is marriageable, and may even be prepared for her nuptials, but she has not yet entered into the heavenly marriage. She is good and true, loving and faithful; but goodness and truth, love and faith, are not yet so fully united in her mind as to make her perfect before the throne of God. This is the case with the virgin church here represented; she is not yet the bride and wife of the Lamb. That is a consummation yet to come, and we shall find it in a future part of this prophecy. Meanwhile, the state of those who form this multitude is described. “They were not defiled with women.” They form a contrast to the woman with whom the

kings of the earth committed fornication (chap. xvii.). The undefiled are those who have preserved themselves free from evil and error ; who have not mixed the holy with the profane ; who have kept themselves unspotted from the world. These are the virgin souls who are honoured in the Word of truth. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersover He goeth. They acknowledge the Lord in His Divine Humanity as their God and Saviour. This is the case, in an eminent degree and in a peculiar manner, with those whom the sealed represent—those who form the New Christian Heaven, and the New Christian Church. The Lord Jesus Christ in them and to them is All—the Creator and Redeemer. Him they follow in their faith, their love, and their life. They follow Him whithersoever He goeth. The Lord leads the faithful by the way which He Himself passed to glory ; for they are regenerated as He was glorified. But those who have finished their course on earth He leads through the never-ending and ever-ascending states of heavenly perfection and felicity. They were redeemed (or bought) from among men. By the Lord's great work in the flesh, all men were redeemed ; for all were delivered from the overwhelming power of the hell that is without them ; but by His particular work by His Spirit, men are redeemed from the power of the hell which is within them. This is the purchase or redemption of which the virgins were the subjects. They were delivered from evil and error, and gifted with goodness and truth ; they were redeemed from among men to be numbered among angels ; they were the first-fruits to God and the Lamb of those who had, like the wise virgins, waited for Him in the middle state, until they heard the joyful cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet Him.” They are the first-fruits as being new-born ; for the first-fruits of the earth are the same as the firstborn of men ; and both are holy to the Lord, because they represent the beginning of regeneration or the new birth, and therefore a foretaste of all that follows. But the firstfruits do not represent the first beginning of the religious life. They represent what we may call the beginning of the end. The firstfruits were the first reappings of the ripe corn ; the first of the ingathering of the harvest ; the matured fruit of the tree that had been planted beside the rivers of water ; of the seed that had been sown, and whose growth had been watched with constant but trustful care. The firstfruits which we produce and offer to the Lord, are the firstfruits of the seeds of eternal truth which have been sown and have taken root in the inner man, and have been brought forth in deeds of love and charity in the outer man. Those themselves who are the first-fruits to God and the

Lamb, are those who have been born anew by the Lord's love and truth ; God and the Lamb being expressive of the Divinity and Humanity of the Lord, and of His Divine Love and Wisdom. In the mouth of these holy ones was found no guile. They were Israelites indeed. They were simple-minded ; without dissimulation. They were lovers of truth, and had no second purpose in seeking and knowing it ; their only end being to serve God and minister to the good and happiness of each other. They are without fault, and unspotted before the throne of God. Having kept their garments unspotted from the world, by shunning evil and every false way, they appear before heaven, which is God's throne, as blameless. None indeed, not even the highest angels, are absolutely pure in God's sight. But those whose ends are pure, are blameless, or without fault before His throne. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Ps. xxxii. 2).

6. John now says, *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.* This is the third angelic bearer of a solemn message whom John saw. After the sealing of the twelve tribes and the opening of the seventh seal, he beheld an angel flying through heaven, saying, Woe to the inhabiters of the earth (viii. 13). After this he saw another mighty angel come down, with a little book in his hand, which John was desired to eat. Now he sees an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel. There is a connection between these three. The last is the most perfect manifestation of the Lord's power, and the most joyous as well as triumphant result of His judgments. The company on Mount Sion represent those who were the first-fruits of the harvest which the Lord was gathering into His New Church in heaven ; and this ingathering is followed by the commencement of the New Church on earth. As we have seen, the church begins in heaven as the world of causes, and thence descends to earth as the world of effects. Here, however, it is not the actual commencement of the church on earth, but the preparation for it, that is represented. Now that the way is prepared, first by the removal of the obstructions which the dragon presented, and then by the elevation of the good out of the middle state, the glad tidings of salvation can be preached anew. The angel is a symbol of the Lord Himself ; but of the Lord as acting through heaven, or by angelic agency. The everlasting Gospel, or an everlasting Gospel, is the same Gospel which the Lord Himself preached on earth in the days of His flesh, but that

Gospel rendered still more glorious. The Gospel he preached had been obscured and corrupted. The book containing it had been sealed. The seals have been opened. The book has been delivered to the Prophet of the Christian church. Its Divine Truths are now to be communicated to men, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, offered indeed to all, and imparted to every class of recipient minds.

7. But the Gospel, as preached at this stage of the progress of the prophecy, is not yet entirely received as the Gospel of love and peace. For the angel was heard, *saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.* The fear of God is not necessarily slavish fear; but even when it is the fear of love, it is a reverential feeling, and all reverence is guarded by, though not necessarily mixed with, fear. Those who are exhorted to fear God are also required to give Him glory. And to fear God and glorify Him is to acknowledge Him as the Author of all goodness and truth. These are ever united in the Divine judgments. For although it is truth that judges, it is not truth alone, but truth in union with goodness. The angel, therefore, commands all to fear and give glory to God, for the hour of His judgment is come. This judgment in the general sense is that passed upon all, but especially which brings error and evil in the church into judgment, and after which a new church is commenced. These are also, therefore, commanded to worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters. And they are required to worship Him as the Maker of all these, because they represent constituent elements of the church; and their Creator is the Being who founded and formed the church. This is the new creation which God was then about to effect after judgment. Heaven and earth mean the church in heaven and the church on earth, or the internal and external of the church. The sea and the fountains of water are Divine truths, as contained in the literal and spiritual senses of the Word, and the doctrines of the church as derived from them. Of all these the Lord is the Author, and as such He is to be worshipped.

8. After the angel who proclaimed the everlasting Gospel *there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* Another corrupt principle of religion, with another branch of the church as its embodiment and exponent, now for the first time comes into view, but which appears prominently in a

future part of the vision. Babylon is self-love exercising dominion by means of religion. Babylon is the Scripture type of that cardinal love in the human heart which, in all ages since the time of the Fall, has been prompting men to grasp at power for the sake of self-exaltation. In the king it is the lust of conquest and dominion in the world; in the priest it is the lust of conquest and dominion in the church. The nature of this principle is fully described and laid open in a subsequent part of the prophecy. Here it is only indicated. Babylon is said to be a great city, because the doctrine by which the love of dominion seeks to attain its ends has great power. She seeks this power by inducing the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. This is universally perceived to mean the making of men spiritually drunk, by stupefying their minds by her teaching and persuasion. The wine of the wrath of fornication is what she communicates as truth, but which is really truth corrupted and profaned.

9-11. A third angel now raises his warning voice, saying, *If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever.* The introduction, after the proclaiming of the universal Gospel, of the two powers which are opposed to it, is not without a purpose and a meaning. It teaches us, that the consequences of being drawn into evil and error in the presence of the truth, are more serious than of being in error without knowing the truth. For this reason those who shall now worship the beast shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. There is no wrath in God. God's love is turned into wrath in the corrupt heart; and His truth is turned into a lie in the perverse understanding. The wine of the wrath of God is the pure truth of His Word turned into falsehood. As the cup is to the wine, doctrine is to truth, and the letter of the Word to its spirit, and the mind itself to the love and wisdom that flow into it. The perversion and destruction of both is expressed in the pouring out of wrath. The torment which is threatened, or rather mercifully declared, is simply the consequence of the evil state which the perversion of heavenly truth produces. The fire and brimstone with which the worshippers of the beast are tormented are the evil loves that burn in their own hearts, and the smoke of their torments

is the falsity that proceeds from them. They are said to be tormented before the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb, because their state is opposed to heaven and to the Lord. That the Lord and His angels enjoy the sight of the torments of the damned is a notion that can only be entertained by the simple and by literalists. *They have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name,* means that those who acknowledge the religion of faith alone, and have its character imprinted on their hearts and minds, shall be continually infested with evils and with the falsities that spring from them.

12. From these worshippers of the beast our attention is drawn to the worshippers of God. *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.* The saints are here introduced and have their patience exercised, because in troublous times, when there is a conflict between truth and error, and between good and evil, the faithful are brought into states of temptation. These states are not only unavoidable but useful; they are the means of removing the dross and leaving the pure silver. And here again we see the character of true as opposed to false saints. Those under the dominion of the beast are the votaries of faith without works. The saints, on the contrary, are those who unite works and faith: they keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ.

13. *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me. Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.* If natural death only be understood, there is no obvious connection between this and the preceding verse; but if spiritual death is meant, we can see the two statements as parts of a series. Temptation, or inward conflict, with those who overcome, ends in the death of the old man, or the corrupt selfhood. This is dying in the Lord, and is that death of His saints which is precious in His sight (Ps. cxvi. 15). Blessedness is said to be theirs who die henceforth. Before this stage in the progress of events, when error and evil prevailed, both in the world and in the middle state, the means of opposing truth to error and good to evil were deficient; so that there was less of conflict between them. And there being less temptation, there was less purification; and there being less purification, there was less blessedness. Now that the universal Gospel has been preached, the case is different: henceforth there is both the light and the power required for conquest. The blessed who die in the Lord

rest from their labours, and their works follow or go with them. A distinction is made between work and labour. Labour and work are widely different. Labour consists in resisting evil, work consists in doing good. Labour is the result of sin ; work is the fruit of holiness. Sin having introduced labour, when sin is overcome labour ceases, and the soul enjoys rest. In heaven there is no labour, because there is no sin. We there rest from our labours. Our warfare is accomplished. But we do not rest from our works ; they follow us. We carry them with us as our eternal inheritance. We carry them, not as the account of so much work done for which we obtain so much reward, but as states of heart and life, out of which felicity springs. The record of our works is engraven on our hearts as states. And from these states works of love will ever proceed, and yield ever-increasing delight and happiness. Works of love, not faith alone, follow those who die in the Lord.

14. The patience of the saints and the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord are followed by a vision of judgment. This occupies the remaining part of the chapter. *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.* This appearance is similar to that in which the Lord's Second Coming is described in the Gospels. The general belief on this important subject is formed from the literal sense of the New Testament prophecies. These prophecies are purely figurative, or rather spiritual, and can only be spiritually understood. Their literal fulfilment, once within the limits of unreasoning faith, are placed by science beyond the bounds of rational belief. The end of the world, the falling of the stars, the extinction of the sun and moon, the appearance of the Son of man in the clouds, and the gathering of all nations before Him, are ideas only suited to an age such as that to which the Revelation was made. Not that the literal interpretation of Scripture is to be given up simply because it cannot be maintained. But He who inspired the sacred writers and prepared the vision for the Seer, knew the time of their fulfilment, and has given the light of science to bear witness to the light of Revelation, as it now shines by an enlightened interpretation. According to the spiritual sense, the end of the world, or consummation of the age, is the end of the church ; the falling of the stars, and the extinction of the sun and moon, are the failing of religious knowledge, faith, and love. In the vision before us, the Son of man is the Lord as Divine Truth, or the Word. The white cloud upon which He sat is the literal sense of the Word, which is represented by a

cloud, because the natural sense of the Word veils its spiritual sense. The golden crown upon His head and the sickle in His hand are both emblematic of judgment. The golden crown is emblematic of His sovereignty and of His love, and the sickle of His truth. Love and truth are united in the Divine judgments. Truth is that which judges, but in all judgment the Lord remembers mercy.

15-20. We now read of the appearance of three other angels; two come out from the temple and one from the altar. The first angel that came out of the temple *cried to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.* When he that sat on the cloud had reaped the earth, *another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.* There are here, then, two reapers, one who reaps the harvest, and the other the vintage, of the earth; one who gathers in the corn of the church, the other the wine. Corn and wine are two of the elements by which the life of religion is sustained; corn the good, and wine the truth of the church. "Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids" (Zech. ix. 17). But the church here treated of has left her first love, and forgotten the Author of her blessings, "She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away My corn in the time thereof, and My wine in the season thereof" (Hosca ii 8, 9). The threatened time and season are come. The Divine bounties that had been given are to be taken away from those who abused them, and given to others, while they themselves are removed into a corner. These two reapers, one from the cloud and the other from the temple, one reaping the harvest and the other the vintage, represent the operation of Divine Truth, as it is in the letter of the Word, meant by the cloud and by one like the Son of Man, and as it is in the spiritual sense of the Word, meant by the temple and the angel who came out of it. In accordance with this character of the reapers is the nature of the harvest. Those who have only known the letter of the Word are judged by the letter, those who have known the spirit are judged by the spirit.

But the two who had the sickles, one in the cloud like the Son of Man and the angel from the temple, did not proceed to cut down the harvest until two others came forth and called upon them to reap.

He that sat upon the cloud was called upon by one from the temple; and he that came out of the temple was called upon by one from the altar. The Divine judgments are effected by wisdom acting from love. The two directing angels represent heaven itself as consisting of the two classes of angels who make up its two kingdoms—the kingdom of wisdom and the kingdom of love. These two kingdoms are meant by the temple and the altar; the angel who came out from the altar is therefore said to have power over fire, for fire is the symbol of love.

When the angelic reaper had gathered the vine of the earth, he *cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.* The wine-press is a common emblem of trial and of judgment; for these are intended, like the wine-press, to separate the good from the bad. In the individual they separate good from evil principles; in the church they separate good from evil men. Trial and judgment are also for the purpose of testing men's works, to bring out their essential and true character. This is the case here. The grapes, like all fruits, are emblematic of works; and the present ordeal is to lay open the real character of the works of the worshippers of the beast, who were practically in the doctrine of faith alone. The wine-press is called the wine-press of God's wrath, on the principle already explained, that God is represented according to man's state, evil in man producing the appearance of wrath in God. *The wine-press was trodden without the city.* In the Jewish economy, from which the figures in the Apocalypse are chiefly taken, everything unclean was carried, and every unpleasant thing was done, first without the camp, and afterwards without the city. Our Lord Himself was crucified without the city; for, without the city was the emblem of what is out of the Church. When the wine-press was trodden, *blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.* Wine is called the blood of the grape; but these grapes yielded, not the blood of the grape, but the blood of guilty men. The city where the evil ones dwelt was Sodom and Egypt; and “their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter” (Deut. xxxii. 32). That which the treading expressed was not, therefore, truth, of which generous wine is the symbol, but falsehood, of which the blood of slain men is figurative. But the remarkable circumstance connected with their blood is, that, as it flowed from the wine-press, it was so deep that it reached to the horse-bridles, and so broad that it covered a space of sixteen hundred furlongs. This singular mode of expressing

its depth and extent can only be understood from the meaning of the figures. The horse is emblematical of the understanding. The bridle, which is employed in guiding this noble creature, is the emblem of truth which guides the intellect. But the mouth of the horse, in which the bit of the bridle is placed, is also that by which he feeds ; and feeding signifies instruction, the mind being fed by knowledge as the body is by food. The blood reaching to the horses' bridles means, therefore, that the truths of the Word have been falsified to such a degree, that the understanding has become so deeply immersed in falsities as to be hardly any longer capable of being either instructed in or guided by the truth. The extent of the sea of blood is evidently as significant as its depth. A space of two hundred miles covered with blood ! When the material idea of space is translated into the spiritual idea of state, the space over which the blood flowed is expressive of the state of the mind, as being thus overspread with falsified truths; the quality of that state being expressed by the number of furlongs over which the blood extended. To ascertain the meaning of numbers, we must trace them to their root, which leads us to the root of the quality or attribute which they represent. Sixteen has the same meaning as four, and four, like two, signifies conjunction ; in the genuine sense, the conjunction of goodness and truth ; in the opposite sense, which it has here, the conjunction of evil and falsity : the hundreds that are added do not alter the meaning, but only intensify it. The kind of measure mentioned has also a meaning. Furlongs are measured ways ; and ways mean truths leading to goodness : in the opposite sense, falsities leading to evil, which is the meaning here. The blood covering sixteen hundred furlongs expresses the idea that, instead of there being truth leading to goodness, there was falsity leading to evil. This being the case, there could be no conjunction of goodness and truth, which is itself salvation, and which constitutes the church and heaven ; but, on the contrary, the conjunction of evil and falsity, which destroys the church and shuts heaven, and thus brings ruin upon the soul. The whole imagery, therefore, of the treading of the wine-press, speaks of a complete consummation.

CHAPTER XV.

1. IN a previous part of this prophecy (chap. viii.), we read of seven angels with seven trumpets, the sounding of which, excepting the last, brought a series of calamities upon the earth. John now says,

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. We have seen that the angels with the trumpets did not produce the evils which followed the sounding of their trumpets, but only disclosed them; just as the law does not produce sin, which it is said to do, but only makes it manifest (Rom. vii. 5 *et seq.*). The law is also said to work wrath (Rom. iv. 15), as these plagues are said to fill up the wrath of God. The seven last plagues, which followed the pouring out of the vials, are not therefore inflictions, but disclosures. That which discloses is truth. "All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light" (Eph. v. 13). The disclosure of evil and error worketh wrath. That wrath is not in God, but in the children of disobedience. In conformity with the appearance, it is ascribed as a cause to that which reprobates it and brings it to light. These seven last plagues are said to fill up the wrath of God. They complete the disclosures which were required to make an end of that which had become old and effete, so that what is new and fruitful may take its place.

2, 3. Between the appearance of these messengers and the pouring out of their vials, there is seen, like a glimpse of glory through a rift in the storm-cloud, *as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.* And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. In the multitude standing on the sea of glass, singing the song of Moses and song of the Lamb, we can hardly fail to see a resemblance to the Israelites standing on the shore of the Red Sea, singing Moses' song, as a thanksgiving to Jehovah, who had gotten them the victory over Pharaoh and his host. Like the Israelites, those who formed this company were celebrating their deliverance from, and their victory over, a powerful and insidious enemy, by whom they had been persecuted and enslaved. Further, those who composed this company were themselves Israelites; and their adversary, the dragon, had the chief seat of his empire in the city, which spiritually is Sodom and Egypt. If there is in this part of the Revelation a studied resemblance to that portion of the Israelitish history, there is every reason to believe that there is also a similarity of meaning. And if we know what is represented by the one, we may with some degree of confidence say what is signified by the other. Israel in Egypt represented the church in a state of bondage, and Egypt represented that which enslaves her.

The true Israel consists of those who unite charity and faith in good works. This alone is true religion ; at once of the heart, of the intellect, and of the life. So far as any religion separates these, and sets up one or other of them as the only condition of salvation, so far it is erroneous. The Egyptians represented those who make religion to consist in knowing, without regard to doing. And those who do this, however they make profession of religion, have neither faith nor love. It was Divinely foreseen, and even foretold, that in the last times the love of many should wax cold (Matt. xxiv. 12), and that the Son of man at His Second Coming would not find faith on the earth, that is, in the church (Luke xviii. 8). When there is no love there can be no living faith ; and when there is neither love nor faith there can be no good works. But it is the doctrine of salvation by faith alone that is treated of in this place. The dragon is the emblem of this doctrine, and of the evil which results from it ; and his two beasts are the means by which it is supported. The multitude on the sea of glass are those who have gotten the victory over the faith which had virtually set those principles aside. In obtaining this victory they pass through much tribulation. They have not only the outward influence, but the inward inclination, to contend with. And not until they pass into the eternal world, nor indeed until the harvest, at the close of the dispensation, do they obtain their final triumph and complete emancipation. It is then that they stand upon the sea of glass, and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. This sea of glass, like the Red Sea, may be regarded under two different aspects, the Red Sea having been the scene of Israel's deliverance and of Pharaoh's destruction. These two aspects are presented in the sea of glass mentioned in chapter iv., and the sea here described. The sea of glass seen before the throne signifies the new heaven in its ultimate degree, as consisting of those who are in general or common knowledges of truth, which are meant by the sea. That sea may be considered as being like, if not represented by, the Red Sea while the Israelites were in it and passing between its crystalline walls. But here the spiritual Israelites have passed through the sea, and now stand upon it, having gotten the victory over their enemies, Pharaoh and his host, who, when pursuing Israel, were overwhelmed by its returning waves, and now lie drowned in its waters, whose depths have covered them. The sea of glass therefore now signifies, not only general truth, but those who, having known these truths, had yet remained in evil, which the truth condemns, and which it ultimately judges. Those who are in this state are spiritually dead, as Pharaoh

and his host were naturally. On account of this signification of the sea of glass, it is now spoken of, not as, but as it were, a sea of glass; for those who only know spiritual things are but their seeming possessors, and in the judgment they are deprived even of these. The sea is now also said to be mingled with fire, for those who have knowledge without goodness are in evil, because they are under the influence of self-love and the love of the world, of which fire is the symbol. Over these evil loves, as well as over those who are under their dominion, this company have gotten them the victory.

And how appropriate is this song in celebration of the victory they have obtained! They have had to contend with the principle and the doctrine, that salvation is by faith alone, without the works of the law, not the ceremonial law only, but the moral law. How significant, too, under these circumstances, is the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb! The Law and the Gospel united! Two that have been separated, and considered to be irreconcilably opposed to each other, are joined together in one grand harmony! Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a life according to the commandments,—these are the very essence and soul of the song, because they are the two universal principles, the Alpha and the Omega, of all that constitutes Christianity. Nothing could afford a more convincing proof of the harmony of the Law and the Gospel than these redeemed and blessed ones singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. It was the expression of their affections and perceptions, and the fruit of their experience. They had passed through the troubles and perils of life, and had found in the Lord and in His law the power which overcomes in the spiritual warfare; and they now unite these in their glorification. In all the praise and thanksgiving of the true church on earth, these two are united. There is no true worship but that which arises from the acknowledgment of Moses as the servant of God and of Jesus as God whom he serves. Moses is the servant of God when the law serves the Divine purpose of leading men to shun evil as sins against God, and to do righteousness as agreeable to His will. And Jesus is confessed to be God Himself when He is loved and worshipped as Jehovah in Divine Humanity.

But the theme of the song demands our attention. *Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.* The Lord's works of creation and providence, redemption and salvation, and His ways in all His dealings with His creatures, are just and true. We are the subjects of a moral government founded on the immutable principles of justice

and truth. This general view of the subject does not however exhaust all that the song of the multitude presents. Considered in its higher sense, as the subject of praise by the regenerate, the song is expressive of their own experience. The Divine works which call forth the praises of the regenerate, especially in the other world, are those which have made them new creatures, and raised them into heavenly states, as well as into heavenly places. The regeneration of the human soul, which is the end and object of all the other works of God, is itself a great and marvellous work. When raised into that world where we shall look from the causes of things to their effects, we shall see far more clearly than now, how great the love and how wonderful the wisdom that have brought us out of darkness into marvellous light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The Lord's ways of dealing with us and leading us, which in this life often appear obscure and perplexed, will, in the other life, be brought to light, and seen to be in all respects just and true.

4. The spirits of these righteous ones exclaim, *Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.* Holy fear is the fear that springs from love, the fear of offending the object loved. Glorification is exaltation. In effect they say, "Who shall not serve Thee from love? who shall not glorify Thee from truth? For Thou only art holy." This is a confession which none but those who have been made holy can make. It is the confession not merely of a truth which all may rationally see, but of a truth which the sanctified only can know; it is a heartfelt acknowledgment that their holiness is from the Lord and is His. Of ourselves we are unholy; all our holiness is of Him; and to Him we should ascribe the glory. The nations who are to come and worship before the Lord, are those who are in simple good, like the well-disposed Gentiles. These readily receive the truth when it is made known to them; and the Lord's truths are His judgments that are made manifest; for it is truth that judges between good and evil, sin and righteousness.

5. When John had seen the victorious company, and heard their song, he says, *And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.* The opening of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven is a sign as appropriate to the occasion as the song of the redeemed. The tables, on which the commandments had been written by the finger of God, were placed in the inmost of the tabernacle and the temple; and the

Divine law was called the testimony. The law of the ten commandments is here brought prominently forward, as that which is opposed to the principle of faith alone. The temple of the tabernacle had been shut, and the law concealed and neglected. Now it is made manifest. It is not only restored to its rightful place; it is opened by the unfolding of its inner meaning, by which its spirituality and power are made manifest for the salvation of men. The temple and the tabernacle were types of the Lord's Humanity; and the testimony was a type, as it was an epitome, of His Word. The temple and the tabernacle were also types of heaven, of the church, and of the regenerate man. All these may be said to be opened by the Lord's Second Advent, for all are made manifest, and will be brought into harmonious connection with the Lord. But the temple and the tabernacle have a different meaning. In respect to the Lord, the tabernacle means His Love, and the temple His Wisdom. In regard to heaven, they mean the celestial and the spiritual kingdoms, or the inmost and the second heaven; and so with regard to the church; in the regenerate man, the tabernacle is the new will, and the temple is the new understanding; and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony may be seen in him, when the law is placed in his inward part and written in his heart.

6. *The seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues.* They are sent forth by the Lord, and they are to test men's faith and life by what the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony represents, and to lay open their states of heart and mind in regard to the two essentials of the church, which are the doctrine of the Lord as the only God, and of a life according to His commandments. These angels are clothed in pure and white linen, having their breasts girded with golden girdles. The fine linen is their righteousness, the golden girdle is their love. The law is the truth, and truth practised is righteousness. When the law is practised from love, love is a zone that binds truth and its righteousness about the heart.

7. *One of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.* The four beasts that surround the throne are the Divine Providence, through which the Lord guards His Word from being profaned, and which is immediately concerned in furthering the Divine purposes and operations in heaven and the church. The vials and their contents are the love and truth of the Word of God. Nothing but these can come from God. He is Love itself and Wisdom itself, and nothing but love and wisdom can come from Him. The wrath, we have seen,

which is attributed to God, is His love acting upon those who are in opposition to it.

8. When the angels had received the vials *the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.* The smoke from the glory of God was like the cloud which filled the Jewish tabernacle and temple, when the Lord appeared in it or over it, and symbolized that covering which is upon all the Divine glory, as the literal sense of the Word covers its spiritual sense. But as the cloud that came between the camp of Israel and the camp of the Egyptians, was a cloud of darkness to these but gave light to those, so this smoke of the Divine glory is a hinderance to entering into the temple till the plagues have dispelled the darkness by removing those who caused it. Regarding the temple as representing heaven, even those who had been sealed could not enter or be elevated into it until the confederacy of evil and error in the middle state had been broken up; for only when the evil are cast down can the good be elevated. In regard to the church and men in the world, they could not enter into the interior truths of the Word until the obstructions that had come to exist between heaven and the church, and between angels and men, were put out of the way. They could not enter into the true doctrines of the Word, nor into its spiritual sense, until light and influence from above should descend into the human mind; and this they could not do until the spiritual atmosphere had been cleared, so that the rays of the sun of heaven could penetrate it, and enter into the hearts and minds of men on earth, when the Lord could send out His light and truth, and lead them.

CHAPTER XVI.

As this chapter treats of the pouring out of the vials, it may be necessary to consider what is the state of the church to which this relates.

The angels with the seven vials evidently follow up and complete what had been done by the angels with the seven trumpets. Both the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials describe the process of searching and laying open the states of those in the spiritual world on whom the general judgment was to be pronounced; and the symbols themselves suggest that the pouring out

of the vials was a still more searching and decisive operation than the sounding of the trumpets. The sounding of the trumpets disclosed the state and character of those on whom they acted, and the pouring out of the vials removed all the seeming virtue and intelligence that had covered and concealed them. The connection between the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials is evident from the fact that all the vials except the last were poured out upon the same objects that had been shaken by the seven trumpets,—the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, the Euphrates, the seat of the beast, the sun. The seventh vial was poured into the air; and its effects were very different from those which followed the sounding of the seventh trumpet. These two series of plagues may be compared to the judgments which Moses brought upon the inhabitants of Egypt, and those which Joshua brought upon the inhabitants of Canaan. Between the two series of calamities there is the long interval of the journey in the wilderness. There is some resemblance to this in the present case. In the wilderness the church, represented by Israel, was nourished for forty years; and in the wilderness the woman, who represented the church, was nourished for a time, times, and half a time from the face of the serpent.

Having explained the particulars respecting the angels with the seven trumpets, it does not seem necessary to enter so minutely into the subject of the pouring out of the seven vials. Our remarks on this part of the prophecy will therefore be more brief. That their distinctive character may be more clearly seen, we will, as we proceed, compare the plagues produced by the pouring out of the vials with the similar calamities that followed the blowing of the trumpets.

1. Having stated that the temple which had been opened could not be entered till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled, John proceeds to say, *And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.* The temple out of which the angel came is the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven, which is the inmost heaven, where the Lord is in His holiness in the Word and in His Divine law; therefore the searching operation, which the pouring out of the vials denotes, comes from the Lord in the temple of His Humanity, and from His Divine law, by which all are tried, and according to which all are judged. The earth, upon which all the seven angels are commanded to pour out their vials, is evidently a general name for the church, whose states are to be fully and finally reduced to their own elements. As the pouring out of the vials signifies the out-pour-

ing of Divine Truth from the Lord, as the One who searches the heart and tries the reins, the church, and consequently the human mind, in its various faculties, states, and principles, is meant by the places into which the vials were poured. Yet the church specially meant is that which has been mentioned as treated of in this part of the prophecy.

2. When the first angel *poured out his vial upon the earth, there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.* When the first angel sounded his trumpet there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. This describes the state of the church when false persuasions united with evil love, meant by hail mingled with fire, consume the affections of goodness and truth, meant by the trees, and all that is vital in faith, meant by the green grass. But the pouring out of the vial did not consume trees, but afflicted men, who mean the faculties themselves of will and intellect which constitute human nature, and produced upon them a noisome and grievous sore. This sore means the breaking out and manifestation of offensive and grievous evils and falsities, which had lain concealed in the interiors of the mind, and which therefore indicated a corrupt state of the will and understanding.

3. When *the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.* When the second angel sounded, the sea became blood; but here it becomes as the blood of a dead man, which is evidently expressive of a more complete or deeper state of the falsification of truth. For shedding blood is symbolical of doing violence to truth, by depriving it of its life, which is goodness; but the blood of one dead, which is blood coagulated and corrupted, means, not merely truth deprived of the life of goodness, but truth profaned and corrupted by the life of evil. When the truths of the Word, and of the church as derived from the Word, are thus corrupted by the evils of a depraved heart, which have grown and acquired strength under the shadow of an erroneous faith, every affection and perception of truth dies; for these are meant by every living soul in the sea, which died by its waters becoming as the blood of a dead man.

4-7. When the third angel with the trumpet sounded, the rivers and fountains became bitter, and many men died of the waters. When *the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, they became blood.* This evidently de-

scribes a deeper state of falsity and evil than the previous searching had manifested. Making the waters bitter is a less evil than turning them into blood. As is the evil so are the consequences, as we shall now find. When the angel had turned the water into blood, John continues, *And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus: For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments.* The waters signifying the truths of the Word, the angel of the waters symbolizes the spiritual sense, and the angel out of the altar its celestial sense; or, to consider it concretely, these two angels represent the Lord's spiritual and celestial kingdoms. The angel of the waters addresses the Lord as righteous or just, and righteousness or justice is expressive of the Lord's Divine Love or Goodness, in which justice has its origin. He also addresses Him as the Being who is and who was, for these are predication of the Infinite and Eternal, and He who is and was is the self-existent and eternal Being, whose Name is Jehovah. What in our version is rendered "shalt be," should be translated "holy." The angel addresses the Lord as Him who is, and who was, and is holy. As justice is expressive of the Divine Love or Goodness, holiness is expressive of the Divine Wisdom or Truth. These attributes, we have seen, are united in all the Divine judgments; therefore the angel ascribes righteousness and holiness to the Lord because He had judged thus. They had shed the blood of saints and prophets, and the Lord had given them blood to drink, for they were worthy. Saints are those who lead holy lives, and prophets are those who teach holy truths. Abstractly considered, they mean holiness and truth. To shed the blood of saints and prophets is to profane what is holy and pervert what is true. And as the unfaithful profane and pervert these in themselves, there is nothing else for them to take but what they have profaned and perverted. When the rivers and fountains of truth, which a bountiful Saviour causes to flow into and spring up in their minds, are turned into blood, what is there but blood to drink? Nor do the unfaithful desire any other. They drink their loathsome draught because they are worthy. It is their desert, their reward. It is their own doing, and they will not and therefore cannot do otherwise. They are the authors of their own terrible experience. The ascription of righteousness to the Lord for having judged thus is therefore

offered by the angel of the waters. In the literal sense this is expressed as if it were a punishment Divinely inflicted and according to the Jewish law of retaliation. But this law, as we have seen, was the temporal and natural manifestation of Divine order. According to this eternal law, good and evil return into the bosom of those who do them. Like all other Divine laws, this has its origin in love and operates by wisdom. So the angel out of the altar confirms the testimony of the angel of the waters. The spirit of truth and the spirit of love both declare the Lord to be true and righteous in his Divine judgments.

8, 9. *When the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory.* This is a severer result than that which followed the sounding of the fourth angel. The third part of the sun, moon, and stars was then smitten, and the day and night shone not for a third part. No effect was then produced upon men; now they are scorched with fire. The sun is the emblem of love. By the pouring out of this vial men were tried as to whether the love of God and of the neighbour was to be found amongst them. But instead of love to God and man there was found the love of self and the world. This love does not warm men, but scorches them. It burns up everything truly human. As a consequence, it leads men to blaspheme the Name of God; for self-love is the source both of hatred of the Divine Love and blasphemy of the Divine Truth. The fire of self-love burns sin into the heart and sears the conscience, and makes them so callous that men refuse to return by repentance to give glory to God as the Saviour and Judge of men.

10, 11. *When the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.* The effect of the sounding of the fifth trumpet seems to differ from this. When the fifth angel sounded, the abyss was opened, and the army of locusts issued from it. There is not, however, any real difference. The king and army of the locusts were the precursors of the dragon and his angels. They represented the same principle in a different stage of development and form of manifestation. The locusts issuing from the pit are the signs of false thoughts proceeding from evil intentions, in which false persuasions have their beginning and origin. The false persuasion of which they are the signs, has now established

itself, and rules in the church and in the minds of men ; for the beast, by which this false persuasion is here represented, has a kingdom and a throne. On his throne the angel pours out his vial. The principle in its very seat and centre, as it rules in the minds of men, is now subjected to the test of Divine Truth. The result is described. His kingdom becomes full of darkness. When we understand the beast as symbolizing the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, the darkness produced throughout his kingdom by the pouring out of the vial upon his throne, tells us, by an expressive figure, that that doctrine, when its hidden character is exposed, is full of the darkness of error, without any of the light of truth. And such is the state which this doctrine produces in those who are confirmed in it, that the truth affects them with loathing, and excites them to pervert it ; which are meant by gnawing their tongues for pain, and blaspheming the God of heaven because of their sores. The light of truth is as painful to a disordered mind as the light of the sun is to a diseased eye. And how appropriate is it that those subjects of the beast repented not to give glory to God ! They had been taught that repentance is of no avail for the remission of sins. Their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. Repentance comes after justification, but has no power to secure it. Unrepented sin lies therefore at the root of this faith, and is brought to light when its own darkness is exposed.

12. *When the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.* The sounding of the sixth trumpet loosed the four angels which were bound in the river Euphrates. Now, its water is dried up. There, the nature and tendency of natural reason are described ; here, its removal is represented. Euphrates is the symbol of reason. As one of the four rivers of paradise, it is the emblem of human reason as derived from and acting in harmony with the wisdom of God. But since the fall of man, his reason is naturally opposed to the wisdom of God ; and he can reason in favour of any dogma which allows him to indulge his natural inclinations. For all error has its cause, immediate or remote, in a desire to reconcile the conscience to self-indulgence, which is sin. When in the time of visitation the truth of God is brought to bear upon reasonings in favour of error, they are seen to have nothing of sound reason in them. The water of the river, so great and imposing, is dried up.

By the drying up of the water of the river, the way of the kings of the east was prepared. By the removal of false reasonings a way is

prepared for the entrance of truth from the Lord into the understanding, as the drying up of the mystic Euphrates prepared the way of the kings of the east. Kings are the emblems of truths, and the east, or the rising of the sun, is the Lord as the Sun of Righteousness. In a general sense the beginning of the New Church is meant by the kings of the east; for the rising of the sun has the same meaning as the morning, and the morning is the Advent of the Lord, and the commencement of His new kingdom upon earth. And this indeed is effected by the removal of hindrances, which men of the church have set up to the reception of truth, by those who have the good ground of an honest heart, but are affected by the persuasive influence of plausible reasonings. As the Euphrates divided Canaan on the east from Assyria, the drying up of its waters prepared the way for the entrance into the Holy Land of those who came from Assyria, so the removal of false reasoning opens the way for the entrance into the church of those who think and act from right reason.

13-16. This is not, however, the case with those who, by interior reasonings, have confirmed themselves in erroneous doctrines, least of all, perhaps, those who have deeply confirmed themselves in favour of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. On the contrary, any exposure of their false reasonings is likely to excite them to hostility, and call forth other reasonings by which the truth may be opposed and their own doctrine supported. We find, therefore, that when the six seals had been poured out, laying open in their deepest ground the error and the means by which it is supported, *Three unclean spirits like frogs came out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.* Frogs are the emblems of reasonings. And as the dragon is the emblem of the principle and doctrine of a divided Godhead and of faith alone, his now appearing to work his own will is a sign of the opposition which those who are in the principle he represents raise against the true faith and those who maintain it. These are said to be the spirits of devils, indicating that their reasonings originate in evil. They work miracles, but these are lying wonders. And they *go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.* These kings of the earth and of the world are evidently of an opposite character to the kings who come from the east; and are employed by the dragon to oppose in them the empire of truth and righteousness. The great day of Almighty God is the day of the Lord's Coming. It is here, therefore, that the announcement of the Lord's Coming to judgment is made: *Behold, I come as a thief.* Of the nature of

this coming it is unnecessary to speak here. We have already shown that it is not a personal, but a spiritual advent. It is introduced here partly for the purpose of inducing men to watch, and hold fast the truth and righteousness which will prove their defence in the day of trial. *For blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.* The Lord is also the supreme power by which that of the dragon is to be overcome, even when he has gathered together all the kings of the earth *into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.* Armageddon does not occur in the Hebrew Scriptures. Megiddo and Megiddon, from which the present name is formed, was the scene of several bloody conflicts, from that in which Sisera was defeated and slain to that in which the good Josiah fell. Critics are not agreed as to the meaning of the word Armageddon. The author of the *Apocalypse Revealed* gives us the spiritual idea which higher intelligences have respecting it, with a literal meaning which is as reasonable as that of any other. "In heaven Armageddon signifies the love of honour, dominion or power, and pre-eminence. In Hebrew Aram or Arom means loftiness; and in ancient Hebrew, as in Arabic, Megiddo means love proceeding from loftiness of mind. The same is signified by Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo in Zech. xii. 11." The nature of the conflict which was there to be waged is clear enough. It is a war between the old and the new, between those who receive and follow the Lord at His Second Coming and those who refuse Him and remain in the error and evil, deliverance from which is the purpose of His Coming. It is a battle, therefore, between the light of the Church of the Second Advent and the darkness which has invaded the Church of the First. Error ever clings to the mind that adopts it, and never relinquishes its hold without a desperate struggle. The conflict between the principle and the dogmas symbolized by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, and the truths meant by the kings of the east, is represented as long and severe. This is true not only of the church as a body, but of the members of the church individually. The Armageddon of the mind is the inward conflict between the old persuasion and the new faith. Every one is naturally disposed to live, not, like the just, by faith, but by faith alone. When Israel was delivered from Egypt, the Lord sent them not through the land of the Philistines, though it was near, but He sent them by the way of the wilderness, because it was sure. The conflict, and the mourning and consolation that follow to those who conquer, are described in Zechariah: "In that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will

pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications ; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. . . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (xii. 9-11, xiii. 1). This prophecy relates to the Lord's Coming in the flesh. But the same states occur in the times of His Coming in the spirit. There is this difference, that the conflict in the day of the Second Advent is more terrible than that of the first. The first is Megiddon, the second is Armageddon. The Christian Church has fallen from a higher state than that from which the Jewish Church fell. The clearer the light from which the church departs the greater the darkness into which it comes; the purer the good the grosser the evil. There is nothing said about the issue of the battle of Armageddon, but only of the gathering there of the armies of the dragon. In a subsequent chapter (xix. 19-21), the battle and its issue are described. There we find the overthrow of the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies. Of these we shall speak in their place.

17, 18. When the seventh angel had *poured out his vial into the air, there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.* The sounding of the seventh trumpet could not be described by the same figure as the pouring out of the seventh vial; for there could be nothing distinctive in this, since all the trumpets were sounded through the medium of the air. They are, however, alike in this, that they both produce an end of the existing state of things. The air, into which the seventh vial was poured, is the emblem of human thought. Next to the sun the air is the most important agent in nature. It is the medium through which the sun acts upon and actuates all things. So thought is, next to affection, the most important agent in human nature; it is the medium through which affection acts upon and actuates all the faculties and powers of the mind. The intellect is to the mind what the lungs are to the body; and what breathing is to the one, thinking is to the other. Thought pervades all, and therefore expresses all. Thence it is that the vial

poured out into the air means the action of Divine Truth into all things of the church and of the mind at once. Therefore, when the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, there came a great voice, saying, "It is done." A manifestation of all states is a full end; and such an end is here declared. This voice is followed by voices, and lightnings, and thunderings, which mean the subversion of all things. This is especially meant by the earthquake, which is said to be greater than all preceding ones. Our Lord, predicting these times, spoke of these tribulations as being such as was not since the beginning of the world, that is, of the church, nor ever shall be.

19-21. So great was the earthquake that *the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.* The great city and the cities of the nations are the doctrines of truth and good, or of faith and charity. The division into three of the one city, and the falling of the others, is their dispersion and destruction. The flying away of the islands, and the disappearing of the mountains, is the departure of all the truth of faith and the good of love; and this is followed by destructive errors or falsities, which are the hailstones, every one the weight of a talent, the greatest silver weight being symbolic of the greatest of falsities. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail. The hail was but a symbolic expression of their own enormous errors; and these were the origin of their blasphemy, or of their falsifications of the Word as the source of truth. In the midst of these commotions and overturnings, the great *Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.* Although there is no obvious connection between the subjects, the language suggests an alliance. It is when the great city is divided and the cities of the nations fall that the great Babylon came into God's remembrance.

Egypt and Babylon, as the two places of the captivity, one of the children of Israel, the other of the children of Judah, represent the two principles under the power of which the church falls when it leaves the home of its Father. First error, then evil. First false science, then self-exaltation. The declension of the primeval church began with eating of the tree of knowledge, and ended with erecting the tower of Babel. The Israelitish church began with the captivity of Egypt, and ended with the captivity of Babylon. The Christian

Church began with the Athanasian Creed, and ended with the establishment of Popery. Her first great step in declension was Egypt, or false theological science, her second was Babylon, or the assumption of universal dominion. The Reformation did not restore primitive Christianity, but only brought the Church back to the creed of Athanasius, with the additional or intensified error of salvation by faith in substitutional atonement. These two creeds, as embodying the two principles of false science and selfish dominion, have an intimate connection; and when the one is manifested, the other comes into remembrance. And that remembrance is but the prelude to a manifestation of its state and character, which is the theme of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER XVII.

THIS and the following chapter treat of Babylon, which forms one of the leading subjects of the Apocalyptic prophecy. The character of Babylon is more especially treated of in this chapter; her fall and desolation are described in the next. Before entering into the particulars of the description the Seer gives of Babylon the Great, it may be useful first to inquire what is to be understood by Babylon, as treated of here and in other parts of Scripture. Although eminently, it is not exclusively, applicable to any one religious body, but extends to all religious communities, and even to all persons, who display the characteristics of what we may call the Babylonish principle. For in this, as in all other cases, the Word of God deals with principles, and only with persons and communities so far as they are actuated by them. Otherwise the Scriptures would, in some instances, be of local and temporary significance, except as historical lessons; but, dealing as they do with principles and states of mind, they remain for ever the same, both in meaning and power.

It will first be necessary therefore to inquire what in Scripture Babylon signifies or represents. The first instance in which Babylon or Babel occurs affords an easy means of ascertaining its character. Soon after the Flood, when men had multiplied, and the whole earth was of one language, they combined to build a city, and a tower whose top might reach to heaven; their object being to make themselves a name, and prevent their being scattered abroad. From the manner in which this attempt was regarded and dealt with by the

Almighty, it is evident that it was a manifestation of self-reliance and self-exaltation. We should rather say it is a symbolic description of spiritual pride and love of dominion : for the event does not belong to the literal, but to the allegorical period of sacred history. How different, in purport and significance, was this dream of the men of Shinar from that of Jacob in Haran ! Their dream was to raise themselves by means of a tower reared upward from earth to heaven ; his dream was to ascend by a ladder let down from heaven to earth. On their pathway is heard the tread of Lucifer, in his ambition to attempt to ascend into heaven, to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to be like the Most High ; on Jacob's pathway are heard the footsteps of angels, carrying out their commission, as ministering spirits, to raise the thoughts and affections of men to God, and to bring down the gifts of God to men. The tower of Babel is in fact a symbol of that worst of all idolatries—the worship of self. Self-love is in most direct antagonism to the love of God. It is therefore directly opposed to the spirit of religion ; and yet it finds in religion the most powerful means of compassing its own ends. Self-love plays a prominent part in all the affairs of human life. The Babylonish principle is the origin of all despotisms, domestic and social, national and ecclesiastical. We do not say that despotism is an unmitigated evil. When it is the only alternative between tyranny and anarchy, between preservation and dissolution, it is a less evil to prevent a greater, and therefore is the best under the circumstances. Despotism is even a schoolmaster to bring nations and churches to liberty. It preserves forms and habits of outward order and subordination, and leaves time and opportunity for the growth of the mind in the principle of rational order and voluntary obedience. No doubt despotic power is commonly opposed to liberty, and endeavours to repress it. But the very efforts to repress liberty are often the means of stimulating its growth, and hastening the downfall of the opposing power. But it is in reference to its activity and power in the church and in the affairs of the religious life that the Scriptures treat of it. Those who seek to acquire power and dominion by means of the holy things of the church are the spiritual and mystic Babylon.

It would be easy to show from Scripture that this love of self and of self-exaltation is depicted by Babylon whether historical or prophetic. A single passage is sufficient to show the character of the evil which Babylon represented. “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning ! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations ! For thou hast said in thine

heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north : I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High " (Isa. xiv. 12-14). True, this was written of the historical Babylon, that rose to such power and grandeur. But the historical Babylon was a type of the prophetical and spiritual Babylon, as Israel whom she oppressed, and Judah whom she carried into captivity, were types of the spiritual church. The conquest and captivity of Judah represented the dominion of self-love over the principles of the church ; and the impious feast of Belshazzar, when he and his princes, his wives, and his concubines drank to the praise of their idol gods out of the sacred vessels of the Temple, was an image of the profane use of holy things to gratify the lusts and passions of the carnal mind. The handwriting that appeared upon the wall, like the arrestment of the building of the tower, was a sign of the Divine judgment which wickedness, when it has reached its height, always brings upon itself.

There is another prominent feature in the character of the Babylon of Scripture which requires to be attended to, which is expressed in the name itself, and which carries us back to the building of the city and the tower. To prevent the completion of their presumptuous work, and frustrate their ambitious design, the Lord confounded their language, and scattered them abroad upon the face of the whole earth ; therefore the name of it was called Babel, or Confusion. When self-love, which is the root of spiritual pride, clothes itself with the forms of religion, and pursues its unholy ends by holy means, it becomes what the name Babel implies, Confusion. Self-love and its kindred affection, the love of the world, are not in themselves evils. On the contrary, being, like the serpent in Eden, created or ordained of God, in their own nature they are " very good." They are good when they occupy their own place and perform their appointed use. Their own place is that of subordination to the love of God and the neighbour, and their appointed use is to be subservient to them. This is the true order. When, on the contrary, self-love exalts itself above the love of God, and the love of the world above the love of the neighbour, this is disorder, and disorder is confusion. It is the inversion of Divine order. And as Divine order is the law of human happiness, that order inverted is the law of human misery.

Inverted order does not always betray its character by evident signs, but more frequently manifests it remotely by its disastrous effects. There may even be a greater appearance of order where true

order is destroyed. Ecclesiastical bodies, like temporal states, may exhibit more outward order and tranquillity under a crushing despotism than under free institutions. The authority being more imperative, and the discipline more strict, outward submission and conformity are more complete. But this condition is only possible under circumstances arising out of degradingly submissive states of mind. It is a state into which, more or less, all hitherto existing churches or religious dispensations have fallen. The Christian Church, like those which preceded it, has had its dark and passive age, ending in the establishment of an ecclesiastical despotism. Such a result was inevitable. For the time it was beneficial. It held together by a strong hand elements that had no inherent power of cohesion, and subjected to outward restrictions those who had lost the ability of self-control. It imposed penance when there was no longer a place for voluntary repentance. It encouraged a spurious piety when there could no longer be true devotion. It impressed religious persuasion when there was no ground for religious conviction. It gave alms when men could no longer exercise charity. It made works meritorious when they had ceased to be disinterested. It glorified single life when there were no longer the constituents of true marriage. It compassed sea and land to make proselytes, when it could no longer make Christians. While these secondary virtues supplied the want of the essential excellencies, and so far kept men and women in the observance of religious duties, the leading men of the church were building upon this foundation an ecclesiastical city, and a hierarchical tower whose top should reach to heaven, that they might make themselves a name, and prevent themselves from being scattered abroad.

But the permanence of such a condition of things was impossible. The human mind must either sink below or rise above it. Religion, once fallen, must either suffer extinction or obtain regeneration. Happily the providence of God never permits evil completely to triumph, nor good entirely to fail. The equilibrium between them may be greatly injured, but is never entirely lost. Divine power interposes at the right time, and restores the balance. The times and the seasons for interposition are in His hands. The Lord may come at an hour when men think not. The time of security is often the time of judgment. When men are combining and labouring to raise for themselves a perpetual habitation, and make for themselves an enduring name, when their confidence in the stability of their work is greatest, at that very time their hour may be come. It was when the city had reached its completion, and the tower had almost reached

its height, that the Lord came down to see the mighty edifice which the children of men had builded. It was when the Christian Church had crowned her increasing pretensions, by so openly usurping the Divine prerogative of mercy as to grant indulgences that encouraged the sins they impiously pretended to forgive, that the Lord "came down to see" the towering ambition of its ecclesiastical rulers. Not less true was His Coming, that He descended not in a bodily shape, but in the spirit of His power as a silent influence. He came down into the minds of men, to enlighten their understandings, so far as they could admit the light, to see something of the error and evil that were thus raising themselves against the authority of the Most High. Rays of light had at various times shot through the darkness, and penetrated receptive minds, resulting in individual efforts, not ineffectual, though not decisive. The human mind was preparing, and these helped forward the preparation. When the state of mind was ripe for it, the arresting hand came in its power. And although, as in most, if not in all, great events, the power was chiefly exercised by one, the concurrent sentiment of the many was sufficiently strong to make that power felt, and produce effects, if not of the greatest positive good, at least to arrest the progress of a great evil. Ecclesiastical unity, which is not produced by the power of truth and love, but only by the weight of human power and authority, is one of the greatest evils that can exist. It takes away that freedom of thought and worship on which the existence of vital religion depends. The vindication of the right of private judgment, and the free possession of the Word of God, were the inestimable rights won for the people by the Reformation. It set up in these a power which no ecclesiastical authority can resist. From that moment the aggressive power of Rome was arrested. It was not overthrown, but it was weakened, and its weakness was exposed. The Reformation was not a regeneration; it was not even a restoration. It did not purge out the old leaven, nor restore the church to its original purity and soundness. It even added a new error to those which it found and accepted. It added the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. It thus increased the confusion it disclosed. In this confusion there is safety. Discordant elements act against each other, and diminish the power for mischief which they have in combination. The divided state of Protestant Christendom, while an evidence of error, is a source of safety and a means of good. It prevents stagnation, and leads to emulation. The sects restrain each other's evils and errors, and provoke each other to good works. The separated parts do better than the whole. They are

like the particles of a fluid that act freely amongst themselves, compared with similar particles frozen into a solid mass.

The check which the Church of Rome received at the time of the Reformation is not the event described in these two chapters of the Revelation. The Reformation was a revivification, not a new creation. It was like the resurrection of Lazarus, who was again to die. It was the return of the shadow on the dial, to be followed by the setting of the sun. The Reformation lengthened the day, but did not prevent the coming of the night. The night which closed upon the whole church was its complete and final end, its Last Judgment. It was the night in which the Son of Man came as a thief, unseen, unheard, unexpected; and what under these circumstances is not surprising, having come, is unbelieved, and therefore unacknowledged. The end of a church or the close of a dispensation, may not immediately affect its condition, or end its existence, as an ecclesiastical institution. As judgment is an event which takes place in the spiritual world, its immediate effects are spiritual, therefore invisible. They only begin to manifest themselves and produce their outward effects as the states of men begin to change. A new revelation is made, and new influences begin to act. And not more rapidly and more widely than their combined operation proceeds, does the old give place to the new. It is a wise and beneficent Providence that so orders it. The same law regulates every great spiritual change as that which ruled the great natural change in the typical church. When Israel entered on their inheritance, and judgment fell upon the nations, the Divine Judge and Benefactor said, "The Lord Thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee" (Deut. vii. 22). Whatever keeps men's animal nature in subjection is not to be hastily removed, even for the substitution of a higher and more perfect ruling power. Gradual advancement is a law of Providence, as well as of nature. All true progress is the Lord's work, and He will hasten it in His time.

We now proceed to consider the vision.

1, 2. As on previous occasions, John is introduced by a celestial guide to the new scene that is to be opened up to his wondering sight. *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her*

fornication. The polluted and polluting character of the woman who is thus presented before us, can only be understood by contrasting it with the purity of virginity and the sanctity of marriage. In Scripture much is said of these two states and against their violation. Virginity and marriage are sacred in themselves, because, as natural and moral states, they rest upon spiritual and eternal principles. Marriage, as an outward institution, is an effect and an image of marriage as an inward state—the union of the spiritual and eternal principles of goodness and truth, first in the Divine mind, and from that in angelic and human minds. This spiritual and heavenly marriage cannot exist unless the two heavenly principles, the union of which constitutes that marriage, are preserved pure. This is the true reason that the Mosaic law was so severe against fornication and adultery, and that the prophets so frequently employ them to describe religious and spiritual corruption ; and this is the reason why the woman who sat upon the scarlet beast is represented under the hateful but shameless character of a great whore. This woman is Babylon. We find Babylon, as we afterwards find the New Jerusalem, under the figure of a city and of a woman—here the corrupt city and lewd harlot, there the holy city and chaste wife. Woman is the emblem, as she is the created impersonation, of that essential element of all life—affection. The church is a city as it exists in the intellect, a woman as it exists in the heart. Babylon, as a woman, represents self-love, the New Jerusalem, as a woman, represents love to the Lord. In whatever heart self-love is the ruling affection, there the Babylonian woman sits enthroned. The many waters upon which she is said to sit are afterwards (verse 15) explained to be peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. The religious aspect, and therefore the spiritual idea of peoples and nations, is that in which inspiration regards them. And as all religions within the church are derived from the Word, either by a right or a wrong interpretation of its truths, the truths of the Word are, abstractly, the waters on which she sits, and over which she rules. As the nations, so the kings and inhabitants, of the earth are to be spiritually regarded. As the peoples and nations are the truths of the Word, the kings who govern them are its leading and governing truths. These are corrupted where self-love has dominion ; for self-love makes all things, even the highest and the holiest, subservient to its own ends. When the end is selfish, all else is corrupt. Self-love in the heart prostitutes all truth in the understanding, and intoxicates all its thoughts. The drunkenness so often mentioned in Scripture is the intellectual infatuation produced by the abuse of truth, in

taking it, not for use, but for selfish gratification. Evil turns truth into falsehood, for it perverts all its teaching, changing the pure wine of the Word into the wine of fornication.

3. What the angel invited John to come and see, he now shows him. *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.* The angel who showed John the bride and wife of the Lamb, carried him away into a great and high mountain. The angel who showed him the scarlet woman, carried him away into the wilderness. That was on the new earth, this was on the old. The Babylonian church was in the wilderness. It was in a state of desolation. The woman whom the angel had spoken of as sitting on many waters, John saw sitting upon a scarlet beast. There must be some relation between these two appearances. The waters, we have seen, are the truths of the Word, the beast represents the Word itself. The Lord was seen by John in vision riding on a white horse and the armies of heaven followed him on white horses. Jehovah rides upon a cherub (Ps. xviii. 10). The Lord rides upon the Word of truth. It is this which brings him near to His church and to the human mind. Its truths and doctrines are His horses and chariots of salvation (Hab. iii. 8). Every church claims to have its foundation in the Bible; and the Christian professes to make it the ground of his faith and hope. But it differs in different minds. That which is a bright cherub in respect to the Lord, under the scarlet woman is a beast full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. To those who make it subservient to their ambitious views and selfish interests, the Word of God is full of the names of blasphemy, for its holy truths are profaned, and profanation is blasphemy. The cherubim, judging from the cases in which they are described, had four heads; for the Word which they symbolize is accommodated to the different states of men, according to their capacity for goodness and truth, and for their conjunction. But the scarlet-coloured beast had seven heads and ten horns. As there is no natural, there must be a mystic relation between the number of its horns and the number of its heads. In their symbolic sense, numbers are expressive of the qualities of the things numbered. The head is an evident emblem of the intellect, therefore of whatever belongs to the intellect—knowledge, intelligence, truth; and the horns of the head are the emblems of intellectual power. Knowledge is power. And in the religious world, knowledge from the Word of God is a power either for good or evil. Rightly understood

and faithfully applied, the Word is all-powerful for good, because it is Divine Truth. Wrongly interpreted and sinisterly applied, the Word is all-powerful for evil, not only on the well-known principle and too well-known fact, that none are so successful as those who work out bad ends by fair means, but because of the reverence for the authority of Holy Scripture among those of the religious who accept with implicit faith whatever has been established as a dogma or is taught as a precept. This is the character and conduct of those represented by the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast. The emblem of selfish, and therefore of sensual love, she works out her foulest ends by the fairest means, even by that Sacred Word, which in itself is full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Its holy truths used for unholy ends are in the very act profaned. The holy truths of the Word profaned are the seven heads of the beast ; whose ten horns are the power which is inherent in the truth, and which the evil as well as the good can exercise. The heads of the beast are afterwards (verses 9-12) explained to be mountains, and the horns to be kings. These, we shall see, are included in their signification, and in our explanation.

4, 5. *The woman herself was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.* How illustrative of the subject is this emblem and its designation ! A beautiful but morally polluted creature, clothed in the most gorgeous apparel, and glittering with a profusion of the most precious jewels ! How true to life, how faithful to analogy ! Beauty, God's created physical expression of moral loveliness, has its appropriate adornments ; and just because outward adornment exalts the beauty of the pure, is it so ardently desired to deck the persons of the meretricious. The same principle pervades the whole of human life, even that of religion. Wherever there is a true and a false, the false emulates the true, and sometimes excels it in its careful attention to outward embellishment. As the riches of nature lie open to the virtuous and the vicious alike, so do the treasures of the Word to the sincere and the insincere. Both may enrich and adorn their minds with its bright and precious truths—its purple and scarlet, its gold and precious stones and pearls. The corrupt daughter of Babylon may put on the beautiful garments and the rich jewels of the virgin daughter of Jerusalem. The church may become so deeply corrupted as to

employ the treasures of sacred wisdom and knowledge to promote her own selfish exaltation, instead of using them to advance the glory of God. This prostitution of holy things is finely described in Ezekiel. The Lord, addressing His church, says to her, “I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work. . . . But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown. . . . And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon. . . . Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of My gold and of My silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them; and tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them. . . . Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto Me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured” (xvi. 11-20). In this way the church may become Babylon, or, what is the same, become, as foretold in this very chapter, subject to Babylon like Judah. For the Babylonish captivity represented the subjection of good to evil, of the love of God to the love of self. When the church thus exalteth herself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that she as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing herself that she is God (2 Thes. ii. 4), the golden cup of Divine knowledge, which she holds in her hand, is full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. The knowledge of Divine things is but a chalice, that may be filled either with the pure truth of the Word, or with that truth adulterated, either with “the pure blood of the grape” (Deut. xxxii. 14), or with wine that is “full of mixture” (Ps. lxxv. 8). The cup which the church holds in her hand may thus be either a “cup of consolation” (Jer. xvi. 7), or a “cup of trembling” (Isa. li. 17); a “cup of salvation” (Ps. cxvi. 13), or a “cup of desolation” (Ezek. xxiii. 33). “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad” (Jer. li. 7). As the ancient Babylon made the whole earth morally drunken, so the modern Babylon has made the whole church spiritually inebriated. The modern Christian sects have drunken of the wine of her false views and ambitious designs, and are more or less maddened by the intoxicating draught.

It might seem that none could be deceived, although they might be

seduced by the woman, since her character is so plainly written and so prominently exhibited. But Babylon is herself a mystery. No one can understand the MYSTERY of Babylon until he knows the meaning of the NAME, not as a distinctive appellation merely, but as the sign and exponent of her character. It has been the practice of Christian expositors to apply this part of the prophecy to some particular ecclesiastical body, the two great opposing sections of the church generally applying it to each other. And no doubt its character may be seen more fully exhibited in that one which claims infallibility and asserts its exclusive catholicity, which asserts itself to be the church, and pronounces all others to be heretics.

It has been maintained that Babylon cannot be intended to symbolize the church in a corrupt state, for if so, she would, as the unfaithful spouse of Christ, have been called, not a harlot, but an adulteress. But both of these epithets are applied to the church which had once been the Lord's wife. Addressing His backsliding people, the Lord says, "Plead with your mother, plead : for she is not My wife, neither am I her Husband : let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of My sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts" (Hosea ii. 2). The church may be guilty of both these sins, because she may be guilty of the two spiritual evils which they represent. Spiritual adultery is the profanation of good of religion, and spiritual whoredom is the profanation of its truths. The spiritual Babylon is no doubt guilty of both ; but she is here presented as the profaner of the truths of the Word, as the mother of harlots, or heresies, and as she who makes the kings of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication ; for both harlots and kings and wine have reference to truths, either in their purity or as corrupted and profaned.

We shall see, however, when we come to treat of the marriage of the Lamb, as announced in the nineteenth chapter, that there is a sense in which the union of the Lord with the church of His Second Advent is the only complete and full marriage of the Lord and His church ; so that the single epithet here applied to the woman on the scarlet coloured beast, may be understood in its restricted sense.

6. But the character of Babylon, so well expressed in her name, is shown by her deeds. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus : and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.* It is too true that the church which, in her earlier days, suffered so much from persecution, became herself a persecutor. Not only infidelity but heresy was considered a crime, deserving the severest punishment. The Babylonish

principle was clearly exemplified in these persecutions. They were not carried on against the enemies of religion, but against those who were considered to be the enemies of the church. Vicious orthodoxy was far less criminal than virtuous heterodoxy. The church was determined to maintain her authority, to secure her exclusiveness, to establish her power; and for this purpose she attempted to crush out all free-thought and independent opinion. It may be said that persecution was agreeable to the spirit of the age. But was it accordant with the spirit of the Gospel? It was contrary to the very letter of its teaching. Had not the religion of Christ become widely as well as deeply corrupted, no such systematic violation of its mild and tolerant principles could have been committed without producing a revolt of religious feeling far greater than the difference of theological opinion it was intended to suppress. The corruption from which these religious persecutions sprung, and of which they were signs, consisted in doing spiritually what they afterwards did naturally. The church had suppressed and perverted in herself the spiritual principles which make saints and martyrs. For what makes saints but holiness? what makes martyrs or witnesses, but fidelity? The church did not so much deny these virtues as pervert them. She made the highest holiness to consist in a useless life of outward sanctity, a perpetual round of devotions, as if God took as great delight in sacrifice as in obeying the voice of the Lord, as if to obey were not better than sacrifice. The guerdon of sanctity which she owed to a life of charity she gave to a life of piety, and made the highest holiness to consist in a perpetual round of formal devotions, and bestowed the martyr's crown on him who wore out on a pillar the life he should have devoted to the glory of God in works of usefulness to men. This was the first and primary shedding of the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. The outward persecutions that followed were but its effects. And even now, when such outward acts are no longer tolerated, the inward evil may still be committed, and committed by men of all churches, even of the true church. For whoever subverts in himself the principles of love to God and love to man, becomes drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs. To mark the contrariety of this state to that of true religion, it is recorded that John, when he saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs, wondered with great admiration, the admiration not of approval, but of astonishment.

7. While John stood lost in amazement at the terrible sight he beheld, a heavenly voice recalled him to reflection, and offered to un-

ravel the mystery. *And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.* The angel then goes on to unfold this marvel in language as mysterious as the mystery it professes to explain. We have already said that the beast on which the woman sat symbolized the Word of God, by which the church, whatever her real character, contrives to support her tenets and justify her practice, whatever they may be, through her own interpretation. The angel's explanation of the beast, when itself explained, will make this still more clear.

8. *The beast, he says, that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* The existence and non-existence of the beast at the same time is not difficult to understand. In itself the Word of God was, and is, and ever will be; but in relation to the church which has corrupted its testimony, it is not; for the Word has no actual existence with any but those who know and acknowledge its truth, and hold that truth in righteousness. A corrupt church, like an unfaithful Christian, may both have the Word and be without it at the same time; may theoretically acknowledge and venerate the holy Book, and yet practically deny or profane its teaching. When the church is in this state, the condition of the Word is described by that of the beast, which is said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. The Word is in the bottomless pit when its truth is falsified; it is in perdition when its good is adulterated. The bottomless pit or abyss has its meaning from the unfathomed or fathomless depths of the ocean: perdition means destruction. These stages in the decline of the church, and in its treatment of the Word had this effect. While the Christian church was in its first stage of declension, it was yet an unsettled question whether the Scriptures could be trusted in the hands of the laity; when it had passed into its second stage, the negative became a settled point, and in the un-reformed branch of the church it so remains. The reading of the Scriptures has never indeed been expressly forbidden; but it is no less practically denied. In the language of the prophecy the beast has ascended out of the abyss and gone into perdition. The Romish church claims not only to be the sole and infallible interpreter of Scripture, but places her decisions above its teaching. The church, according to her own testimony, existed before the Scriptures: how

then can she be subject to them? In thus exalting herself above the Word, the church ensures and hastens her own downfall. The Word is the church's protector, as well as her guide. When she places herself above it she leaves the narrow path, which is the way of safety as well as of duty, and enters the broad road that leadeth to destruction. She herself will wonder when she sees that the Word which she placed on a lower level survives her. When her end comes, "They that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." The earth is a figure of the church; and those who dwell on the earth are the members of the church. The world also means the church, the foundation of which is the foundation of the church. But what is meant by being written and not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world? The language might seem to teach or justify the doctrine of an eternal decree of election and reprobation. Names written from the foundation of the church may also seem to sanction the idea of preordination. But the foundation of the church is not the time of its commencement, but its state when first commenced, and, in a more interior sense, the principles on which it is founded, and on the soundness of which the stability of the church depends. A name that is not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world is a character that has no conformity with the fundamental principles of the church, as revealed in the book of life, the Word of God. Names which hold an honourable place in the annals and headrolls of the church, may not be found written in the book of life. Yet as those who pierced the Lord shall see Him at His Coming, so shall those who have overridden the authority of His Word behold it in its power and glory.

9. After declaring the mystery of the beast, the angel explains what is meant by its seven heads and ten horns. *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth; and they are seven kings.* The mind that hath wisdom is the mind that sees these "revelations" as unfolded by the law of correspondence, or the relation which exists by creation between the spiritual world and the natural, and between spiritual and natural things. According to this law, mountains correspond to love and kings to wisdom. We have seen (verse 3) that the seven heads of the beast are emblematical of knowledge and intelligence derived from the Word. The Word is nothing, and therefore teaches nothing but goodness and truth, or what is the same, love and wisdom, charity

and faith. The principles of goodness and truth which it teaches are meant by the seven mountains and the seven kings. In Scripture mountains are emblems of love and goodness, and kings are emblems of wisdom and truth. The woman sits on the seven mountains. She is first said to sit on many waters, then on the scarlet-coloured beast, then on the seven mountains meant by the heads of the beast. These describe successive states of the church. First she rules over and by the simple truths of the letter of the Word, then over the Word itself, and, lastly, over the good and truth which it teaches. The first asserts her claim to be the true interpreter of the Word, then to be its sole and infallible interpreter, and finally dictates from it what is to be done as good, and what is to be believed as truth. Thus she first claims, then seizes, then binds.

10. The angel now delivers some mysterious sayings respecting the seven kings. *Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.* The seven kings are all the primary and holy truths of the Word; primary as being kings, holy as being seven. But of these five are fallen. Isaiah describes this state of things where he says, “ Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey” (lix. 14, 15). These are the kings that are fallen in the street of that which was once the city of God, His church and kingdom upon earth, but which has now become “that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth”—which rules over the truths of the church. Still, of the seven one is, and the other is not come. The kings that are fallen are truths relating to the neighbour, that teach judgment, and justice, and equity; the kings that remain are truths relating to the Lord. There are two primary Scripture truths, or classes of truth, that relate to the Lord: one teaches His Divinity, the other teaches the Divinity of His Humanity. The truth which teaches the Divinity of Christ, and that, as the Saviour God, He has all power in heaven and on earth, is, and has always been, acknowledged in the church. This truth is the one king which is. It is of the Lord’s providence that this Divine truth should never fall; for it is the foundation on which the church essentially rests. It was therefore providentially preserved, and enshrined in the creed, which, ever since the Council of Nice, has formed the faith of Christendom. But this was only one of two regal truths relating to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is another, which the creed does not contain. It does **not** contain the truth, that the Lord’s Humanity is

Divine. It teaches that Jesus is God and Man ; but it does not teach that He is God-Man. Yet this is the very highest Gospel truth relating to the Lord ; and is that which the Lord Himself so frequently expressed when He prayed for union, and declared His equality, with the Father. This is a truth which the church has never clearly seen or recognized. It is the one other king which has not yet come. It has, indeed, been mooted, and a glimpse of the truth has been obtained, but it has only been for a short space. The idea has never found a place among settled theological ideas. It has therefore passed away, and is now perhaps farther from being a part of Christian belief than at any former period of the Christian church. Although the church has preserved the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, it has not preserved it pure. The true doctrine of the Lord's Divinity is that of His sole Divinity. His union in the Godhead with two other Divine Persons detracts from the true and complete Divinity of Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9) ; and who is over all, God blessed for ever (Rom. ix. 5). But besides being corrupted, this truth has been profaned. The power of Jesus in heaven and on earth is claimed to be vested in and exercised by him who impiously claims, and is as impiously acknowledged, to be His vicar upon earth.

11. Another part of the angel's mysterious explanation remains. *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.* The beast, we have seen, is the Word of God, and the seven mountains and seven kings are the principles of goodness and truth which the Word contains, and are derived from it. But what is the meaning, in reference to the Word, of the beast being the eighth, and yet of the seven ? The Word is the fountain of goodness and truth. The fountain is in the streams that issue from it ; but the fountain is more than the streams. The sun, as the fountain of heat and light, is in all the rays that proceed from him, each of which is an atomic sun ; but he is more than them all, and distinct from them all. So the Word of God, as the fountain of goodness and truth, is in every good and truth that comes forth from it ; but it is, at the same time, above and distinct from them all. In the mysterious language in which the Word describes itself, it is thus the eighth, and is of the seven. But this enigmatical language has a more interior, and therefore a more exact and instructive meaning. The number seven, we have seen, is expressive of holiness ; the number eight, like the number two from which it is derived, is expressive of union. The Word is holy, and is holiness itself ; and this quality is

expressed by its being of the seven. But the Word is also the union of love and wisdom, or goodness and truth; and this quality is expressed by its being the eighth. God is love itself and wisdom itself; and their perfect union in Him is the perfection of His being and character, and therefore of His holiness. As is the Lord, so is His Word. And the Word was revealed that we, by its teaching, might become in one measure what the Lord is. The duty of the church is to preserve and teach it in its purity, it being her greatest honour to exalt and magnify it. What must be her character when she uses it as a means of self-exaltation and selfish dominion? when she thus degrades and dishonours, except in empty phrases, the Word of eternal truth and everlasting life?

12-14. The remaining portion of this chapter treats of two classes of persons, distinct from each other, but both of them different from that described under the figure of Babylon. The first of these two classes is described in these verses. *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* Those who form this class are not represented as being opposed to the woman, but yet as giving their power and strength unto the beast. It is easy to see, and it is difficult not to see, in this class, those who are not hostile to the church of Rome, but who yet ascribe to the Word of God the authority and power which that church had arrogated to herself, and which she vested in the pontiff, whose virtual claim to infallibility she has now established by a formal decree. There have always been some in the Romish church who objected to the papal claims, and who gave the power of their love and the strength of their faith directly to the Word, and thus to the Lord. The old Catholic movement in our own times is a broad and striking instance of this. The leaders of that movement desire to remain in communion with the Catholic church, but, in the language of the angel, they have one mind, and give their power and strength unto the beast. Among the Catholic nations there is a considerable diversity in the degree of their devotion and submission to Rome. How different in this respect are France and Spain! Nor is the difference in popular sentiment only. Some of the most illustrious names of Catholic France are to be found among the Jansenists and Port Royalists, who manifested in their

writings and conduct the power of Divine Truth, symbolized by the ten horns which are ten kings. In that country there are still many whose acknowledgment of the papal power is only superficial and formal, and who are disposed to regard the Word as the supreme authority in the church. Those we have now been considering have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive power as kings one hour with the beast. They have not acquired independent government; but they have the power which truth confers. The hour during which they enjoy this power with the beast is not a period of time, but a state of life. The state meant by an hour is their state of acknowledgment. They receive power one hour with the beast in their state of acknowledgment, that the Word is the supreme authority in the church, and in matters of faith and discipline. The Lord promises to them that overcome that they will sit down with Him in His throne. Those, too, who overcame their errors and prejudices in favour of infallible judgment and irresponsible power, and ascribe these to the revealed Word of God, will receive regal power with and from it. Such, we venture to say, will increase in numbers and in strength. The night is past. the morning has dawned, and the day which is at hand will chase away the darkness, in which alone gross errors can live, especially those which relate to the Lord and His Word. The truth respecting the Lord Jesus Christ as the only God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Saviour, whose very Humanity is Divine, will meet with strong resistance in the minds which have but partially emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage to a venerable dogma. They will make war with the Lamb by resisting the idea that His Humanity is Divine. But the Lamb will overcome them by convincing them: for He is Lord of lords and King of kings. He is the Author of all the good and all the truth of heaven and the church. And all who accept the truth that the Word is Divine, and who are "kings," will ultimately acknowledge the true and sole Divinity of Jesus, who is King of kings, as the Truth from which all the truths of the church are derived, and to which they all lead.

15. The angel now returns to his first statement respecting the woman. *And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.* We have already considered this meaning of the waters mentioned in the first verse, and need only remark on the cause of its being introduced here. The waters are the truths of the Word. First they are mentioned as in subjection to the church, and prostituted by her, for she is the unchaste one that sitteth on them. They are next explained to

be peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, to express, not the natural extent of her dominion, but the variety of the spiritual states of those over whom she had exercised her authority; and the explanation is introduced here, because it is to these that the present part of the prophecy relates.

16, 17. The second of the two classes of which we have spoken comes now before us. *And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.* These, it is clear, are directly and openly opposed to the church described by the woman. This class includes all those who have not simply dissented from the Papal claim, but who have seen, more or less clearly, and have opposed, more or less strongly, the general intellectual and moral corruption of the church. The ninth and tenth centuries were the darkest in the history of the church, as well as of Europe. In the twelfth century the Albigenses stood out against the errors and corruptions of the church, but were persecuted with relentless fury till the whole sect was exterminated. Besides the Albigenses of France, the Wykliffites of England and the Lollards of Germany revived and kept alive the claims of spiritual freedom and of the Word of Life; for God had put into their heart to fulfil His will. At last the Reformation arose. That was but the culmination of a movement that had been going on for generations in the minds of the men of Christendom. Dark as the ages were, the light had never been entirely extinguished; evil as they had become, good had not entirely failed. Supreme as the will of the Pope had become, God had put into the hearts of many to fulfil His will, and give their kingdom unto the beast. That which the ten kings were to fulfil does not mean the will of God, but the will of the beast. This shows that the beast is an emblem of the Word of God, and that the will and teaching of the Word are opposed to the will and teaching of the Pope and of the Romish church. On this ground the ten kings agreed, or had one will, to give their kingdom unto the beast. Those who in all ages of the fallen church have been the exposers of its corruption and opponents of its despotic power, have had this as their great object, to bring the Word from its prison house, either as concealed from the people in the words of an unknown tongue, or withheld from them by the vigilant watchfulness of a debased and interested priesthood. The great achievement of the Reformers was to give

their kingdom unto the beast. The Reformation vindicated the claims of the Word of God to supreme authority in the church, and the claims of the whole church to the use of the Word of God, with the right to draw living water from that well of salvation. The Reformation, besides, exposed much of the corruption of the church, and neutralized much of her evil. It made her desolate and naked, and consumed her flesh, and burned her with fire. We have said that the Reformation was a palliative, not a cure. Its efforts were to prolong, not to perpetuate the duration of the dispensation. For according to the unfailing words of the prophecy, they were to give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God should be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the words is the passing away of the old dispensation and coming of the new.

18. The angel ends his discourse by saying, *And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.* In this and some other points there may be a coincidence between the literal and the spiritual sense. At one time the church ruled over all the kings of the Christian world. The spiritual cause produced the natural effect. The church at one time had all the intellectual power of Christendom; and the dominion of the spiritual over the temporal power was the result. Had the power of the church been exercised for the good of mankind, and not for selfish aggrandizement, she would have laboured to enlighten the nations instead of enslaving them. But the assumption of the right to rule over the truths of the church led to the claim of the corresponding right to reign over the kings of the earth. A more general enlightenment and a higher intelligence have wrested that power from her grasp, and her rule over the truths of the church will in due time pass from her hands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A NEW scene, but one intimately connected with that which we have considered, now opens to our view. The character of Babylon is disclosed in the previous chapter, the judgment of Babylon is described in this.

1. *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.* Another angel because another phase. The previous angel

was one of those who had the seven vials, for that was a time of exploration; now it is an angel that has great power, for this is the day of separation. That which this angel possesses is the power of Divine goodness, as opposed to the power of human evil; and the earth, that is, the church, is lightened with the true light of Divine glory as opposed to the false light of human glory, or with the light of truth as opposed to the darkness of error.

2. *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.* A strong voice bespeaks a strong will. The Divine will is infinite love. The voice of Divine truth that announces or pronounces judgment is also the voice of Divine love. In all His judgments the Lord remembers mercy. The Lord never judges from truth alone, but from truth and love united. It is not the Judge but the judged that separates them. The evil have the truth without the love, and thus receive judgment without mercy. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," is a cry of love as well as of truth on the Lord's part, and it is the announcement of a double fall on the part of the church, a fall from love and a fall from truth. As Babylon is great, her fall is great. Not error alone, but evil and error united, make the church and the man of the church great in iniquity, and make their fall great. And those who have fallen from truth and love become as a consequence the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Self-love and the love of the world are the demons that possess them, the lusts that they inspire are the foul spirits, of which their affections are the hold, and the impure, wicked thoughts are the unclean and hateful birds, of which their understandings are the cage.

3. The reason for the judging of Babylon is, that *all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.* The profane mixture or union of principles that are in their nature abhorrent to each other, which is characteristic of Babylon, is described in these words. Goodness and truth are homogeneal and congenial to each other, and their union forms the heavenly marriage, and heaven itself. Evil and falsity are similarly allied, and their union forms the opposite of the heavenly marriage and of heaven. There are, however, two unnatural combinations and conjunctions, that of good with falsity and of truth with evil. These are here represented as taking place.

Nations and kings are the principles of goodness and truth ; the woman and her impure wine are evil and falsity. The conjunction of what is good with what is false is meant by the nations being drunk with the wine of the wrath of the woman's fornication ; and the conjunction of what is true with what is evil is meant by the kings of the earth committing fornication with the woman herself. These strange mixtures are, in the strict sense, the profanation of goodness and truth. This is a sin that can only be committed by those within the church, for they only can possess the knowledge of what is good and true. This knowledge constitutes spiritual riches ; for knowledge is intellectual wealth. And those who are of the character we are now considering are zealous in acquiring the knowledge of holy things, but only that they may use it for an unholy purpose. These are the merchants of the earth, that is, of the church, that wax rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4. *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.* This new voice from heaven is the voice of exhortation, and one to which we shall do well to take heed. In the natural sense it would seem to be a call to give up fellowship with a corrupt religious communion. We do not say that this is not a duty. But the spirit of the present exhortation is still more practical. It is possible to break off connection with a religious body without forsaking its evils, and to remain in communion with it without being a partaker of its sins. But there is one coming out which, whatever communion we may belong to or forsake, is an imperative Christian duty, and saves us from participating in a common sin. Self-love is the Babylonish principle. It has a place in all hearts, and perhaps in all communions, and therefore in all human affairs. It is the source of more than half the evil and bitterness of public and private, of social and domestic, life. In its strictly religious aspect it shows itself in persons and sects trusting in themselves that they are righteous, and despising others. So far as, individually and collectively, we are in self-love, we are in Babylon. From this evil love we must come out, that we partake not of her sins nor receive her plagues. Before we can forsake an evil we must, however, know what that evil is—its character and consequences. It is to those who know and understand this that the exhortation is addressed. They are the Lord's people. Spiritually, people and nations are those who are respectively in truth and in good. We may be in the truth, and yet be under the influence of self-love ; we may be the Lord's people, and yet be in

Babylon. We may be like the children of Judah in the Babylonish captivity. They were carried away captive, not because they did not know, but because they did not hearken to, the voice of Divine truth. So long as we know the truth and do not the good it teaches, we are in bondage. To all who are yet in this state the exhortation is addressed, "Come out of her, my people. Be ye not partakers of her sins,"—for sin is imputed to those who know it; "that ye receive not of her plagues,"—for the misery of sin is to those who, knowing it, continue in it.

5. As a reason is assigned for judging Babylon, so is there for exhorting the Lord's people to come out of her. *For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.* What is the import of this reason? It appears as if the sin of Babylon is to be allowed to go on until it *has* reached to heaven, when the Divine remembrance of her past sins is to be awakened. Although free-will exists, evil has its limit. The limitation of evil is the preservation of free-will. Free-will depends on the equilibrium between evil and good, and therefore between heaven and hell. If the power of evil were to overcome the power of good, the power of choosing between them would be lost. When the power of evil so increases as to threaten the existence of the balance on which free-will depends, the evil must be restrained by judgment, which is indeed as natural a result of the excess of evil in the moral atmosphere as the thunderstorm is of an excess of electricity in the air. Judgment, like the thunderstorm, restores the balance. It is when her sin reaches to heaven, and the powers of heaven are shaken (Matt. xxiv. 29), that God remembers the iniquities of Babylon that have risen to this daring height, and threaten the stability of heaven, both among the angels and in the minds of men. This is the truth revealed here, and wherever in the Word we read of sin reaching to heaven, and of God remembering the sins of men.

6, 7. Besides exhorting the Lord's people to come out of Babylon, the voice lays on them this injunction: *Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.* The law of retaliation, the enforcement of which is here enjoined, originated in the celestial law, Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you. Being a law of Divine order, its rule is as universal as the Divine government.

Among angels and spiritual men it is the law of love, among natural men and evil spirits it is the law of hatred. It was because the Jews were natural men that the law of retaliation was permitted to find a place in the Mosaic code. When the Lord came into the world to establish a spiritual church, the law which demanded an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was abolished, and Christians were required to resist not evil (Matt. v. 38). This is the law of heaven. In that kingdom which is the opposite of heaven, and where the opposite of heavenly love prevails, the law of retaliation exists, and is enforced with terrible exactitude and unrelenting severity. All outward punishment in the other life is inflicted by it. The Lord punishes none. Nay, He moderates the punishment which evil spirits delight to inflict upon each other. The Mosaic law of retaliation was a type of this. Moses did not originate that law, for it is a law of nature, but of unregenerate nature. It existed long before his time. All that the Jewish law did was to soften and restrain it. So in the other life. He who gave the law of Moses softens and restrains the law of retaliation in hell, making that corrective which the evil desire to make destructive. The law of retaliation is capable of being made corrective, because it has its origin in a law of order. It is for this reason that the Divine government can be exercised through that law, and can control its application so as to make it useful for preserving such external order as can exist in the kingdom of disorder, whose natural condition is anarchy. It is for the same reason that, in the letter of the Word the punishment of the wicked is ascribed to the Lord, and that the Lord's people are enjoined to reward Babylon as she had rewarded them. As the Lord's people are the members of the church who are in the truths of the Word, in the abstract sense they are those truths themselves. By profaning the truths of the Word, the wicked bring upon themselves the retribution which has its first origin in the laws of truth, which are thus the remote origin of their punishment. The injunction to the "people," "Reward her even as she rewarded you," expresses the law, that so much as truth is transgressed or profaned, so much does the infernal form of that law fall upon the offender. So much as she has glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her, enunciates the law, that the pride of self-love and the intellectual vanity of self-intelligence are changed in the other light into sorrow of heart and intellectual inanity. "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and

weep" (Luke vi. 24, 25). The retribution however is to be double the injury. This expresses another law. Everything that is completed is doubled in the other life. Doubling in the spiritual sense of Scripture does not mean duplication but conjunction. It is therefore used in Scripture both in relation to the good and the evil. "For your shame ye shall have double, . . . therefore in their land they shall possess the double" (Isa. lxi. 7). The consummation of wickedness is the reciprocal conjunction of evil and falsity, and the perfecting of righteousness is the reciprocal conjunction of goodness and truth. As a consequence, the conjunction of goodness and truth makes heaven, and the conjunction of evil and falsity makes hell. The conjunction of evil with falsity is meant by doubling to her double according to her works, and the conjunction of falsity with evil is meant by filling or rather mixing to her double the cup which she herself hath mixed.

These calamities overtake the woman for her inward boast, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." The difference between the evil and the good, the false and the true, is very striking and instructive. Pride and humility, self-confidence and self-distrust, are their opposite characteristics. As with the individual, so with the church. The more corrupt the church, the greater the confidence she has in her own excellence and exalted position. The woman's glorification of herself is very expressive of this. She saith this in her heart. Not outward but inward boasting. There is a pride that apes humility in churches as in men. A church proclaims herself the servant of servants, while she aspires after universal dominion, and washes the feet of mock saints, while she invokes foul curses on the heads of honest dissenters. She may tenderly care for the souls of heretics, while she tortures and burns their bodies. But saying in her heart means more than secret thought. The will is in the mind what the heart is in the body. It is the fountain of its life. What is said and done there flows as a living stream through the whole system. When self-love is a queen, it is there she sits enthroned, issuing her mandates, and making her sovereign power to be felt to the most distant parts of her kingdom. Her very posture expresses a state and a sense of easy security. She sits as a queen. And while she claims to be a queen, she declares herself to be no widow, and to be above the reach of sorrow. True, she is no widow. Neither is she a wife. Yet she was once a wife; or if not a wife, an espoused virgin, a bride. She was once the bride of the Lord Jesus. And she still claims to be His spouse; for she asserts that she is no widow. But as the

voice of prophecy declares she would become, the testimony of truth declares her to be, a harlot. Her state is that described in the prophets, "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not My wife, neither am I her Husband" (Hos. ii. 2). "Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorce, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away" (Isa. l. 1). The cause of separation between the Lord and the church is the same now as it was then. It is not the result of priestly ambition only, but of general corruption. Priestly ambition is only the form which the common corruption takes in the clerical mind. In all cases of the church's divorce, the true cause is not particular but general, "For your transgressions is your mother put away."

8. Because the church flatters herself that she sits as a queen, and shall see no sorrow. *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.* The one day is the day of judgment. Yet not so much a time as a state of judgment, as we have already remarked (ver. 5). The certainty and completeness of her overthrow are assured; for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her. The plagues which come as the result of judgment are not Divinely-inflicted punishments, but the manifested effects of inward states. These, as here declared, are death, mourning, and famine. Death, the opposite of life, is spiritually the extinction of all that constitutes life. Love is life. Love to the Lord and to each other constitutes spiritual and eternal life. The extinction of these loves is spiritual and eternal death. Death is not, however, a negative state only. The extinction of love to God and the neighbour is due to the active existence of the loves of self and of the world. These are the positive elements of, and their predominance constitutes, the state called death. This state is common to both worlds, but in the other world it appears as it really is. In this world we see rather the shadow of death than death himself. Seldom do we behold that king of terrors face to face. He is so clothed with education, so agreeable with manners, so concealed by prudential motives, that it is only on rare occasions we are startled and horrified by a transient vision of his distorted form and hideous features. In the other world these outward coverings fall off, and the evil thing stands forth in awful distinctness and appalling ghastliness. With death come mourning and famine. The delights of evil, so pleasurable in this world, in the

other world are turned into their opposites. Joy is turned into mourning, fulness into famine. And still more terrible, the fire is kindled that will never be quenched, and burn continually without consuming. That fire, indeed, consumes, it consumes all that is good and true, but it ever burns with unquenchable hatred against all that angels love, and most of all against the Lord Himself, as infinite love and goodness. It is because this love of self is directly opposed to the love of God, and therefore to God as Love, that the utter destruction of the woman by fire is ascribed to the strength of the Lord God that judges her. For judgment arises, not from the Lord's opposition to the evil, but from their opposition to Him. When the opposition of self-love to Divine love reaches its height, it brings itself into such conflict with its opposite as results in its own conflagration; as substances are resisted to a burning heat by rapid motion through a resisting medium by striking against a resisting body. And the stronger the resistance the more complete the combustion. It is the eternal opposition of self-love to the love of God and to God's love, that keeps the fire of hell for ever burning. If self-love could cease its opposition, the fire of hell itself would be extinguished. We have already seen (xvii. 16) that, in the Scripture, burning is often spoken of as the punishment of profaners, and of the profane Babylon in particular. When Nadab and Abihu usurped the priest's office, and offered strange fire before the Lord, "there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them" (Lev. x. 2); and when the 250 princes, who had joined the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, appeared at the door of the tabernacle with their censers to perform the priest's office, in opposition to the claim of Moses and Aaron, "fire came out from the Lord, and consumed them" (Numb. xvi. 35).

9, 10. So far this chapter relates to those who are opposed to Babylon; what now immediately follows refers to those who sympathise with her. These consist of three classes—kings, merchants, and ship-masters. What these are in their religious meaning we have now to consider. And first regarding the kings. *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.* These kings, unlike those represented by the ten horns, do not hate the woman, but love her, they do not blame the woman, but bewail her. And in bewailing her they bewail them-

selves ; for the kings have lived deliciously with her, and the merchants and shipmasters have been made rich by her traffic. First reigned over by the woman (xvii. 18), and afterwards yielding to her desires, these kings became partners with her in her sins. Their difference from the ten kings is marked by their designation. They are called kings of the earth, which the others are not. Kings are emblematic of truths, and the earth of the church. Kings of the earth thus represent truths of the church. These kings represent truths, or what were once truths ; for now the truths once held in simplicity by the church are profaned. Truths are profaned by being applied to an evil use. The right use of truth is to teach men holiness. "Sanctify them through Thy truth : Thy Word is truth" (John xvii. 17). When that which was given to lead men to holiness is made the means of leading them to something that is outwardly holy but inwardly unclean, it is profaned. Truth is thus wedded to evil,—no, not wedded, for there can be no marriage between them ; but is drawn into an unholy, and therefore criminal connection with evil, and made to minister to impure desires and ambitious views : this is to commit fornication with the woman. When this is the case, the delights of evil in the will are communicated to perverted truths in the understanding, which then flatter the evils they were intended to reprove ; and this is to live deliciously with her. The truths which the church perverts are those which belong to the letter of the Word, from which the doctrine of the church is derived. These truths are also meant by the kings of the earth. The letter of Scripture is capable of being perverted, because it consists chiefly of apparent truths, which may be adopted as real truths, and made to confirm opinions and practices at variance with the spirit of its teaching. Of the injurious consequences of perverting the literal sense of the Word we have a striking example in the interpretation which the church came to give of the Lord's words to Peter, respecting the keys of the kingdom of heaven. No such power as that of opening and shutting heaven was given to the apostle, and there is no evidence that he ever claimed or exercised it. The power was given to Peter's faith, and to all who in faith make Peter's heaven-inspired confession, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. What a perversion of this truth to place Peter's keys in the hands of a man, and call him Peter's successor and Christ's vicar, and declare him the head of the church, and give him the power of admitting into, or excluding from heaven whomsoever he will !

The wilful perversion of Divine truth in this world is followed by terrible effects in the other life. Truth once joined to evil by per-

version can never be entirely severed from it. The existence of evil and truth in one mind produces that condition described in the fables of antiquity, of being alternately in heaven and on earth. The truth draws the soul upwards to heaven, and the evil drags it downwards to hell. This state, more than any other, is the cause of future suffering, and is the root of the torment of Babylon, for fear of which the kings and merchants stood afar off, when they saw the smoke of her burning. Remoteness from Babylon at the time of her judgment is a point of great significance. There is no space in the spiritual world or in relation to spiritual things. Dissimilarity of state is the only cause and measure of distance in the other world. Yet those who sympathise with, and indeed belong to Babylon, stand afar off from her in the day of her destruction. It is not uncommon in this world for those who have profited by the vices and helped forward the ruin of others, to forsake them in the day of their calamity. There is this difference between the two worlds. Here, those who minister to and profit by the vices of others may prosper ; for this is a life of probation : there, the partners and abettors share in the ruin they have helped to produce ; for that is a life of fruition. There are, however, two different states to be considered, one peculiar to the men of Babylon, and one common to them and to others. Their peculiar state is that of profaners ; they use holy means to effect unholy ends. Unbelief rejects the truth, hypocrisy perverts it. Perverted truth, which after all is but perverted knowledge, enables the mind to see its own perversion in its terrible results, when the smoke of falsehood ascends from the fire of evil, inspiring terror and awakening reflection. It is common to all who are wicked to have alternate states of security and fear. When they are in the delight of their love, they are blind to the character and consequences of their states ; when they come into anxiety and distress, they see for the moment the nature of their evil, and fear its torments. The remorseful sinner stands for the time afar off from his sin. The love of sin is his inner life, and while all seems prosperous, it is his whole life. When calamity comes, any good he possesses revolts against the inner life, and he is for the moment humbled and removed from it, and sees it from afar off as another self.

The smoke of burning is the false principle that arises from the fire of self-love. Evil love in the heart generates false ideas in the understanding ; and these make love intellectually visible, as thought reveals affection. Yet false thoughts do not reveal to the evil the nature of their own affections, nor excite sorrow on account of them.

Considered in its more general apprehension, the kings of the earth

are not the ruling principles but the ruling persons in the church, who enter more deeply into her doctrines, her purposes, and her plans. These sin more deeply with her. And having participated more in her pleasures, they will be more in fear of her torment, and lament more feelingly with the great and mighty city, when the hour of her judgment comes.

11-14. Another class of those who sympathise with Babylon are the merchants. This class consists of two distinct divisions. Merchants are mentioned again at verse 15, who are other than the merchants mentioned here. So that altogether we have men of four different characters who lament over the fall of Babylon. *And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.* The merchants of the earth are those who buy and sell the things required for the uses of the natural life; and the merchants of the church are those who procure and dispense the things required for the support of the spiritual life. The kingdom of heaven is compared to "a merchant man" (Matt. xiii. 45); but the unheavenly-minded merchants are those who seek their own honour and gain by trafficking in holy things. All that maintains the spiritual life is comprehended in the two universal principles of goodness and truth; but these include an endless variety of particulars. Many of them are enumerated under the figure of natural things; as, *the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves (bodies), and souls of men.* And *the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.* This long list of the goods that formed the trade and wealth of Babylon may seem to be introduced to give an ideal picture of the immense and multifarious traffic of the "great city." But as all natural objects and productions are symbols of spiritual things, *each of them has a meaning, and all are arranged according to spiritual affinities.* What thus seems at first sight a heaping up of precious and common things that constitute the wealth and riches of Babylon, a closer attention will show to contain distinctions and classifications of a very interesting and instructive character. It has often been remarked that the imagery of the Apocalypse is taken for the most part

from the Jewish church. The Revelation is like the Pentateuch. The religious worship of the Jews was embodied in various representative forms; and several things were required for its proper celebration. The highest of these was the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple. As Babylon is a figure of the church, but of the church in a state of great corruption, various articles which constituted the wealth of the great city answer to those which entered into the construction or were used in the service of the house of God. The offerings for the tabernacle were “gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, and rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate” (Ex. xxv. 3-7). The things mentioned in this part of the Revelation are of the same nature as these.

First (ver. 12), we have *gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, and thyine wood*, answering to shittim wood, that entered into the structure and adornment of the sacred edifice, and the gold and precious stones that formed Aaron’s breastplate; then we have the *fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet*, that formed its curtains and coverings, and the garments of the high priest; and lastly, we have *all manner of vessels of ivory, and of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble*, answering to the sacred vessels of the holy house. When the church is compared to a woman, the fine linen and purple are, as in the case of the high priest, considered to be her garments, and the gold and precious stones her ornaments. The woman, as seen on the scarlet beast, was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; and in this chapter she is lamented as that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls.

Secondly (ver. 13), we have the *cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense*, answering to the spices that were used for the holy oil for the lamps, and for incense; then we have the *wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat*, that answer to the drink and meat offerings of the tabernacle; and then we have the *beasts and sheep*, that answer to its sacrifices and burnt offerings. We pass over for the present the *horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men*.

Thirdly (ver. 14), we have the *fruits, and dainty and goodly things*, answering to the fruits and other produce of the field that were dedicated and sanctified to the Lord—a tenth of which was devoted to His service, for sustaining the priesthood, the rest, as the fruit and re-

ward of their labours, serving for domestic and social uses, and festive enjoyments.

These are not accidental resemblances, but are real analogies, and answer to the principal elements of religion, arranged according to their relations and affinities. The first relates to doctrine; the second to worship, and the third to their effects in the uses and enjoyments of life. Under this classification we will consider them.

12. The things mentioned in this verse have relation to doctrine. These things enumerated are of three kinds—*merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls; and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble.* While consisting of three series, each series consists of pairs. These are gold and silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet; thyine wood and vessels of ivory, vessels of precious wood and of brass, and iron and marble. They consist of three series, because there are three degrees in all things; and they are arranged in pairs, because all things have relation to goodness and truth. All these are symbolical of principles of goodness and truth of different kinds and degrees, from the highest good which is love to the Lord, symbolized by gold, to the lowest truth, which is that of the senses, symbolized by marble. And they are arranged in pairs, because all doctrine has relation to goodness and truth, as all the law and the prophets hang upon love to the Lord and charity to the neighbour. The thyine wood and the marble, which we have connected as a pair, are not indeed found together in the text. The reason is this,—the thyine wood is mentioned as the first, and the marble as the last of the things that belong to the natural series, or the principles that belong to the natural mind. The highest good of the natural mind is the good of obedience, and its lowest truth is that which is adapted to the senses. All higher good closes in and rests upon the good of obedience, and all higher truth closes in and rests upon the truth of appearance, or apparent truth.

13. The things enumerated in this verse have relation to worship, and these also are of three kinds, and are arranged in pairs. There are *cinnamon and odours, ointment and frankincense; wine and oil, fine flour and wheat; beasts and sheep, horses and chariots, bodies and souls of men.* These pairs have relation to what is good and true, of the three degrees, celestial, spiritual, and natural. Thus cinnamon signifies worship from love, and incense or perfume is worship from wisdom; for love is made fragrant and grateful by means of wisdom.

Love without wisdom is without perception, and therefore without variation, and without consciousness of its nature and use. Ointment and frankincense signify love to the neighbour, and the truth which directs and qualifies it. Wine and oil signify truth and good which are from a celestial origin, and relate to love to the Lord; and fine flour and wheat signify truth and good which are from a spiritual origin, and relate to love to the neighbour. Of the three pairs which follow, beasts and sheep are truths from a spiritual natural origin, horses and chariots are truths and goods which are from a rational origin, and slaves (or bodies) and souls of men are truths and goods from a natural origin. These, although intrinsically more excellent than the animals that precede, are slaves, and being deprived of the rights of humanity, are mere instruments of service.

14. The third class of things that constituted the wealth of Babylon, have relation to the delights and satisfactions of mind which are the fruits of doctrine and worship, and which the soul desires as the result of its religious convictions and duties. These are meant by *the fruits that thy soul lusted after, and the things that were dainty and goodly.* All those precious things signify the precious things of the Word, possessed as knowledge and traded in for gain, but of which their owners are deprived in the other life.

When doctrine is true and worship is sincere, joy of heart and satisfaction of mind are the fruits. But when self-intelligence underlies doctrine, and self-love underlies worship, joy is turned into sorrow, and satisfaction of mind into corroding anxiety and discontent. The delights of corrupt religion arise from the influence they give over the minds of men, and the dignity and opulence that this secures. And when in the other life all this is ended, what remains but the wretchedness of spiritual contempt and degradation? The delight of their life is gone, and undelight turns existence into a living death.

15-19. Babylon herself being destroyed, and all her riches and glory laid in the dust, and consumed in the fire of her own self-love, *the merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they*

cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Traders by sea and land lament over the fall of Babylon. The land and the sea, as we have seen (chap. xiii.), are descriptive of the church as it consists of two classes—those who, like the clergy, enter interiorly into its doctrine and worship, and those who, like the laity, remain more on the outside; as the merchants were the owners, and the shipmasters were but the carriers, of the wealth of Babylon. Both of these classes lament over the fall of the great city; for both have found their living in her service, and been enriched by her traffic. Babylon is here called a city, and is yet described as a woman, clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls. But in one hour so great riches have come to nought. Judgment produces no intrinsic change of state, and yet no change can be greater than it effects. It often reverses the judgment of the world, and always the judgment of the worldly. It strips off all appearances, and brings all things to their true level. Can any change be greater than this, which is yet no change? In the re-adjustment of things the rich may become poor, and the poor rich, the happy miserable and the wretched happy, the exalted debased and the humble exalted. It is the general substitution of the unreal for the real that brings judgment upon churches. When religion has become a cloak for selfishness and domination; when sanctimoniousness has taken the place of holiness, and outward propriety the place of virtue, the end must be hastened, or religion would die out, leaving no remnant from which a new commencement could be made and a new church formed. The end, whenever it comes, must bring weeping and wailing to those who have lived deliciously and confidently, but who have lived to themselves and the world.

20. But although the end which the judgment brings is a cause of lamentation to the evil and the false, it is a matter of rejoicing to the good and the true. Therefore it is said, *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.* Heaven and holy men do not rejoice over the condemnation of wicked persons, but they rejoice over the condemnation of wicked principles, and in the triumph of righteousness and truth. Indeed, this rejoicing is the rejoicing of heavenly and holy and right principles themselves. When evil and error prevail, heavenly influences are shut out, and the lessons of righteousness and truth, which the apostles and prophets teach, are secretly or openly contemned. Then heaven

is shut up, and the apostles and prophets mourn. But when God has avenged them, vindicated them from the aspersions which sin and sinners had cast upon them, and thus delivered them from the oppression of their enemies, they rejoice, and communicate joy of heart to all who receive them.

21. *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.* The mighty angel is an emblem of the Divine power, especially of that power as exercised through heaven. The act itself is emblematical not only of the Divine power which was to cast down Babylon, but of the power of Babylon which was to be cast down. The millstone, one of the first and commonest signs of civilized life, is symbolical of one of the first and commonest signs of spiritual life. Corn, when produced, must be ground to fit it for its proper use. So must the corn of heaven, as given in the Word, be comminuted by reflection to fit it for the proper uses of spiritual life. Investigation and reflection are a kind of trituration, for it consists in analyzing, or resolving a compound into its constituent elements, or in reducing a whole into its particular parts. Investigation and reflection on the teaching of the Word may of course have for their end either the elucidation of truth or the confirmation of error. The confirmation of error, as the means of advancing selfish ends, is that which is meant by the stone cast by the angel into the sea. For this stone is not said to be, but to be like, a millstone. The faculty of confirming error is not true reason, but is only like it. Clever but unscrupulous persons who have cultivated, not the faculty of reason, but the power of reasoning, can confirm either side of a question, and it is indifferent to them which side they take, and they espouse that which suits their interest. The power of confirming error is the great stone like a millstone which was cast down, as an emblem of the destruction of Babylon. The power of the corrupt church is broken when its false reasonings and conclusions are exposed. This is not done by human argument, but by enlightened reason,—by light let in from heaven, after judgment has dispersed the dark clouds that obstructed the inflowing light and heat of the Sun of righteousness. The violence with which Babylon was to be cast down is expressive of the irresistible power with which the religious principle she represented was to be removed from the place it had usurped in the Christian church. For has not the religious despotism of Popish authority and infallibility hung like a millstone about the neck of the church, dragging her down into the

lowest depths of spiritual degradation? The law of retaliation, which is a law of order, brings upon the church, as upon the individual, the evil which she herself had deliberately done. And it is for the welfare of the human race that such a doctrine and crushing despotism should be found no more at all. A church which claimed absolute property in the bodies and souls of men is inconsistent with the spiritual and natural freedom, the religious and civil liberty, under which true and vital religion can alone flourish.

22, 23. The power of an ecclesiasticism may be broken, and yet its form and its name may remain. So it may be with the modern Babylon. There may be outward pomp and pretension while there is inward desolation. How strikingly is this represented in the present instance! *And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.* The images here presented are very expressive and easily understood. It is easy to see that the desolation of Babylon will be such, that there will be no more the delight arising from the harmony of the affections for goodness and truth, meant by the musicians; there will be no more the intelligence and wisdom, meant by the artificer; no more the earnest inquiry after and investigation of goodness and truth, meant by the sound of the millstone; no more enlightenment and discernment of truth, meant by the light of a candle; and as a consequence of the absence of all these, no longer any conjunction of goodness and truth, which constitutes the heavenly marriage and gives heavenly felicity, meant by the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride. Where these are heard no more at all, there is indeed desolation and woe. And what is the cause of this ruin? The merchants of Babylon were the great men of the earth, and by her sorceries were all nations deceived. Her priests desired to be princes, and strove to acquire ecclesiastical instead of spiritual wealth and power, the power of authority to bring men forcibly under the dominion of the church, instead of the power of persuasion, to bring them freely under the government of the Lord. To effect their purpose they used sorcery, poisoning the minds of the people by their pernicious principles and practices, all tending to suppress free thought and paralyze the faculties, by penalties which the church

assumed the power to inflict in time and in eternity. The assumptions gave power especially over the simple-minded, who are meant by the nations, all which they “deceived,” or led into error.

24. *And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.* Prophets and saints, abstractly considered, are the truths and goods of the Word, whose blood is their destruction by being falsified and profaned; and, as the earth is a symbol of the church, all that were slain in the church are the principles of the church destroyed. When the principles of the Word are deprived of their heavenly life, the church must perish. It is maintained, it is true, both by the Church of Rome and some of the Protestant branches, that the church is not to be judged by the Word, but the Word by the church. But this assumption is the offspring of that priestly authority which has brought the church to its night and consummation.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE have now seen disclosed the nature and results of the two great evils that arose successively in the Christian church, and that gradually, and at last entirely, subverted her principles. One of these evils was self-love, the other was the love of the world. The first subverted the principle of her love to the Lord, the second subverted the principle of her love to the neighbour. These are meant by the great whore, and by the great red dragon. They are not described in the Revelation in the order in which they arose in the natural world, but in the order in which they were disclosed in the spiritual world. For this reason Babylon, which represents the first great corruption of the Church’s principles, appears after the dragon, which represents the second.

Although the two evils represented by these signs and symbols have been exhibited by the two great sections of the Christian church, yet they belong exclusively to no particular religious communion. Every church that has hitherto existed in the world has fallen under their dominion. They are evils inherent in our fallen humanity. As a tendency to these evils is inherent in our nature, all have a personal interest in the subject, since all are liable to fall into the same states, and practically adopt the same principles.

1, 2. The vision now further unfolds itself, and presents a new scene. *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power,*

unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. The joy in heaven caused by the fall of Babylon, is not like the shout of victory on earth, in which there often is neither justice nor mercy. The just made perfect, even those in the lower heavens, meant by the much people in heaven, do not rejoice at the calamity of the unfaithful, whether they be churches or men. The only shout of triumph raised in heaven after the judgments of God, is at the victory of good over evil, and of truth over error; and on account of the spiritual benefits resulting from it. Therefore the key-note of the Alleluia is Salvation. This, with glory, honour, and power, is ascribed to the Lord for His true and righteous judgments, in having judged the great whore, which had corrupted the earth with her fornications. The angels rejoice and glorify the Lord God, because He had by judgment removed what had been an obstruction to the descent of light and heat from the Sun of heaven, or of love and truth from the Lord through heaven to the church on earth, and through the church to the human race. This is a cause of joy to angels, as it should also be to men. The happiness of angels consists essentially in communicating of what they possess, not only to each other, but to men upon earth, to whom they are sent forth as ministering spirits, to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation. In dispensing their blessings to others, they only imitate the Author of all blessings, whose ministers they are, and who repays them with increase; for influx is according to efflux, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again" (Luke vi. 38). As it is the blessedness of angels to give, it is the blessedness of men to receive. When they freely receive the mercies which angels give, mercy is twice blessed; it blesses those who give, and those who take. Yet the happiness of men does not consist in receiving only. Men are subject to the same law as the angels. Their happiness, as much as that of the angels, consists in giving. With them, too, influx is according to efflux. One of the main causes that men do not receive is that they do not give. With the same measure that they mete withal it is measured to them again; but they receive that measure running over. The capacity of receiving is increased by giving. Heavenly wisdom is not increased by extending the memory, but by enlarging the heart; and this can only be done by men doing

their duty as a labour of love. When men do not receive what is offered them through heaven, the joy of the angels is diminished. But there are general and intermediate, as well as particular and direct, causes for the diminished reception of angelic influence. The state of the church on earth, and the condition of the intermediate state or world of spirits, have some share in determining the measure of man's reception of heaven's gifts. When these have become unfit to be proper instruments of the Lord's saving operations, the influx of Divine good and truth through heaven is retarded and even perverted; and the work of salvation would be arrested, were not the hindrances removed by a work of judgment. Angels rejoice over judgment only as a necessary means of salvation. Unhappily judgment falls as a punishment on those who have corrupted the ways of judgment. Yet there is nothing of retribution, much less of vengeance, in the Divine judgment of the unfaithful. In judging the great whore, who corrupted the earth, or the church, with her fornications, the Lord is said, indeed, to have avenged the blood of His servants at her hands. The Lord's servants, abstractly considered, are the truths of His Word; for truths are the servants of goodness, the ministers of love. The blood of the Lord's servants is shed when the truths of His Word are falsified and profaned. The Lord avenges the blood of His servants when He vindicates His truth from the perversions that had deprived it of its life and usefulness, and restores it to its antiquity as the guide to righteousness. Personally considered, the servants of God are those who serve the Lord in truth. Many of these have suffered martyrdom for bearing testimony to the truth. But the great sin of those whom Babylon represents, consists in injuring or destroying the spiritual life of others, by perverting their faith and charity. Those who are spiritual martyrs are avenged in the judgment by being delivered from the errors that had seduced and the evil that had oppressed them. Their blood is avenged when the truths they had acquired from the Word are freed from the false interpretations and interested applications that had turned them into errors, and thus bent them into compliance with evil.

3. When the heavenly multitude had uttered their praise to God, as the Author of salvation and the righteous Judge, *again they said, Alleluia.* There are two affections from which praise to God proceeds —love to the Lord and love to the neighbour. These are the beginning and the end of all true worship, whether of prayer or thanksgiving. They constitute the sum of religion. All religious corruption resolves itself into a corruption of these principles; all

vindication of them resolves itself into their restoration. The judgment of the great whore was the vindication and deliverance of religion from the corrupting influence of self-love and the love of dominion. This deliverance was a cause of joy to the righteous, not only because of its general results, but because of its particular effects. They rejoiced over their own deliverance, in being separated from those who had thus corrupted religion, and freed from the influence which they had exerted over them, both during their abode in the world, and while they remained between death and judgment in the middle state.

But the judgment which delivered the righteous from the influence which had been exercised over them, deprived the evil of the truth they had perverted and the good they had profaned, and left them a prey to their own inherent evil and the falsity which belonged to it. Their state is, therefore, now described. *And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.* Evil, when stript of its disguises, by being deprived of the truths which it had falsified, can utter nothing but what is false; for evil love produces false thoughts as naturally and spontaneously as fire produces smoke, and in the Word are meant by them. And what thus springs from the affections of the heart into the thoughts of the understanding, ascends for ever and ever. It not only continues without end; it enters into all the thoughts, words, and acts, making them the form and image of itself.

4. The glorification of the Lord by the multitude in heaven, is now answered responsively by the elders and the four beasts. *And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.* The responsive Amen and Alleluia of these higher powers, is the confirmation of the truths, which the lower heavens uttered, by those of the higher, and even by the Word itself, which is above as well as in heaven, which the four beasts, in the highest sense, represent. In the particular sense, in which all truth refers to individual experience, the response of the higher angels to the Alleluias of the lower, is expressive of the harmony and unity that exist between the lower and higher affections and perceptions of the mind, in those who are in heavenly states, as well as by those who are in heavenly places. True worship proceeds from, and is the outward expression of, inward affection. But true worship has also the effect of strengthening the affection from which it springs. If there is no outward act, there can be no inward response. If the devout feeling fails to put itself forth in acts of outward worship, it languishes, and even closes the mind against the influence or inflowing of the Spirit of love and truth from the Lord.

If, on the contrary, it comes from the heart in praise and prayer, the mind is opened for the reception of new influences and gifts. This indeed is the result, as it is the end, of all true worship ; and of this we read in what now follows.

5. *And a voice came out from the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.* This voice from the throne, in answer to the praise of those beneath and around it, was from the Lord Himself. The Lord does not speak, even to those in the highest heaven, by an audible voice : He speaks into the heart and mind by the inflowing of His Divine Truth, which is the Holy Spirit. This is the Divine answer to all true worship, whether of praise or prayer. In relation to the present subject, the call to all that serve and fear God to praise Him, is an exhortation to all in heaven as well as to the faithful upon earth, to praise God for having removed out of the way that which had corrupted the church by falsifying and profaning the truths of the Word.

6. The voice from the throne, calling upon all the servants of God to praise Him, is answered by a glorification, both the agents and the subject of which are of deep interest. *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia : for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.* Considered in connection and series, the first Alleluia was raised by those in the lower heavens, meant by the much people in heaven ; the second was raised by the highest, meant by the elders ; and this is raised by the whole heaven, meant by the great multitude, the sound of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings. Thus the universal heaven, from the affection of truth, meant by many waters, and from the affection of goodness, meant by the voice of mighty thunderings, rejoice that the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. The Lord reigns in the church and in the hearts of men when they acknowledge and come under the government of His Love, Wisdom, and Power, these being meant by Lord, God, Omnipotent. Worldly love, wisdom, and power had usurped their authority in and among men. Their reign is now ended, and the Divine government and kingdom are restored.

7. The multitude celebrate another event that follows the commencement of the Lord's reign. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.* The Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ ; His wife is the church. The marriage of the Lord and the church had taken place long before the period to which this prophetic vision

relates, and even before John heard the rejoicing at their nuptials. This is, therefore, a new marriage ; and a new marriage implies a new church. The church which the Lord had espoused at His First Advent had been unfaithful. She had broken the covenant into which the Lord had entered with her. The covenant was this : “ I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” This was the condition on which the members of the church were to be His people, and He was to be their God. This covenant the church had broken, both in the spirit and the letter, one branch of the church formally regarding the law itself as a covenant. Besides, how is it possible there can be true marriage with a church which acknowledges three Persons in the Godhead, each, singly and by Himself, God and Lord ? Can the church have three husbands ? Does not such a faith of itself dissolve the marriage of the Lord and the church ? But although the church as a whole has proved unfaithful, and has left her first love ; in this, as in all other cases, a remnant has been preserved, with whom the marriage bond has not been entirely broken. This remnant consists of those who acknowledge the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and approach Him, in faith and worship, as their God and Saviour, without thinking whether His Humanity be Divine or not. They are not in the negation which prevents marriage, but neither are they in the affirmation that makes marriage complete. They are rather betrothed than married. With them the marriage of the LAMB has not yet come ; His wife has not yet made herself ready. These may enter into the marriage, by entering into the church which is to be the Lamb’s wife, but they must make themselves ready. How do they make themselves ready ? The church, which is now called the Lamb’s wife, is the same that was represented by the woman in the wilderness, whither she had flown on the wings of a great eagle, to be there nourished for a time, times, and half a time from the face of the serpent. She represents the church as yet limited to a few, undistinguished from others among whom she dwells, who have not accepted the message of the two witnesses, nor placed themselves under the rule and protection of the Man-child. The church in this state makes herself ready, when those who are to be of the New Church are “ collected, initiated, and instructed.” To be collected, they must be gathered together and formed into a body ; to be initiated and instructed they must have an agency and means other than those which they previously possessed. We can hardly understand this to have any other meaning, or to admit of any other conclusion, than that the New Church is to have an organized existence distinct from the Old, and, as such, to have the

means and agencies which such a body requires for the instruction of its members, and, of course, for carrying out, in worship and in life, the uses which instruction has in view as an end. As distinction does not necessarily imply separation or division, the distinct organic existence of the church, as consisting of those who acknowledge the Lord in His Humanity to be the only God of heaven and earth, and the only bridegroom and husband of His church, is perfectly consistent with the idea and the existence of one Catholic church, consisting of all, throughout the whole world, who are possessed of any spiritual goodness.

As there can only be a full marriage of the Lord with the church which acknowledges, not the Lord's Divinity only, but the Divinity of His Humanity, it may, in a certain sense, be said that a full marriage of the Lord and the church has never taken place till now. All churches that existed before the Lord's Coming into the world were representative churches, and saw truth in the shade. They had only communion and conjunction with the Lord through heaven, which is mediate or indirect. Therefore the Lord always appeared to the patriarchs and others in the person of an angel. But when the Lord came into the world by birth of a human mother—when "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but took on Him the seed of Abraham," His presence and communion with men was immediate or direct. Men saw God face to face, for they who saw Him saw the Father; and their life was preserved. And when the Lord had glorified His Humanity, and made it Divine, although it ceased to be seen of men by the natural eye, it is even more intimately present with them than when they literally saw and handled of the Word of life. As, since the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, there is immediate communion with the Lord, so can there be immediate conjunction with Him. There can, therefore, since the Incarnation, be an actual and full marriage of the Lord with the church. But it was provided that the Christian church should go on unto perfection, not only by imperceptible degrees, but by distinctly-marked stages. The first of these commenced at the Lord's Coming in the flesh; the second commenced at His Coming in the Spirit. His Coming in the Spirit, which is His Second Coming, is commonly understood to be the end of the world; but we have already seen, and it will still further appear, that the Lord's Second Advent is indeed to end the first Christian dispensation, but it is also to commence the second. Great as were the blessings conferred upon the human race by the Lord's First Coming, still greater blessings are conferred upon them by His

Second Coming. The difference may be said to consist in this: The first dispensation received the knowledge of general truths; the second receives the knowledge of particular truths. These are not arbitrary gifts, but are bestowed by a wise and beneficent Providence, whose arrangements are based upon the mental progress of the race, which its own operations produce. As every general truth contains many particular truths, the knowledge of particulars enlightens and enlarges our views of truth; for general views of any subject are relatively obscure and limited. Such being the nature of the distinction between the first and second dispensations of the Christian church, their relation to the Lord Himself is of the same distinctive character. The same truths belong to both, because they possess the same Revelation, but the second enters more interiorly into the truths of the Word, and is therefore able to enter into a more interior conjunction, or into a more perfect marriage, with the Lord than the first. Relatively, the Lord's union with the first church was betrothment; His union with the second is marriage. Yet even in this view of the subject, the first church was the Lord's wife, and her unfaithfulness was deadly sin; for under the Israelitish economy, in which all things were representative, the betrothed virgin was regarded as being the wife of her affianced, and unfaithfulness to him as her husband was considered adultery, and was punished with death (Deut. xxii. 23, 24). The marriage of the Lamb, over which the heavenly multitude rejoice, is not betrothment, but marriage, in its full and completed state, a union that, in regard to the church herself, will never be dissolved.

8. When the multitude rejoiced that the marriage was come, and the Lamb's wife had made herself ready, it is said, *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.* The truths in which those who are to be of the New Church are initiated and instructed, are the fine linen in which the Lamb's wife was arrayed. But the church, we must observe, is not arrayed in fine linen simply by acquiring a knowledge of the truth, but by bringing the truth into practice in a holy life: *for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.* Saints are those who lead holy lives, and keep their garments unspotted from the world. Therefore it was granted to the Lamb's wife that she should be arrayed, not simply in fine linen, but in fine linen, clean and white. Clean and white as the truths of the Word are in themselves, they are not clean in us until they have cleansed us from sin, nor white until they have freed us from error. When purified from these, righteousness and truth form the saintly garments of the

true members of the Lord's true church. Then only are they clothed in the fine linen which is the righteousness of saints.

9. All things being now ready, a most important announcement is made by the angel to John. *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.* The marriage of the Lamb, in the fulness and perfection of the Lord's conjunction with the church which acknowledges Him in His true character, and regards Him as the only object of her faith, her love, and her worship, is an event of transcendent glory ; and happy indeed are those who are called to the marriage supper. But does this mean that the call is limited ? The call is as limitless as the Lord's love, as free as His grace. The invitation to the marriage, like the offer of the water of life, is no doubt addressed to all : “ Whosoever will, let him come.” But in Scripture those who are called do not always mean all indiscriminately who are invited, but those who are disposed to accept the invitation. It is said of those who are with the Lord that they “ are called, and chosen, and faithful ” (xvii. 14) ; where the “ called ” form one of three classes who are on the Lord's side in the spiritual warfare. It is a blessed thing to know and believe, contrary to the narrow faith in partial election, that all are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and that all may freely come ; but it is a positive blessing to those who are in that state which enables them to hear the call, not only with the outward ear of sense, but with the inward ear of willing obedience.

The marriage feast is called a supper because the time of supper is the end of the old church ; and the marriage which then takes place is the commencement of the new. When one dispensation ends, another begins. There is no hiatus between them. On the same night and on the same occasion, the Lord with His disciples kept the last Passover of the Jewish church and the first Holy Supper of the Christian church. The one passed, as it were, into the other. So with the dispensations themselves : all that is preserved of the old passes into the new, and there acquires new light and life. The marriage supper of the Lamb is not only the celebration of the Lord's union with His New Church, but the provision which He has made for sustaining the spiritual life of those who are called. This provision is more rich and abundant than that which could be made for any former dispensation of the church, because the human mind is now prepared to receive more and higher truth, and in and through it more perfect goodness, than at any former period of its development. There is, in

consequence, the possibility of a more perfect conjunction of goodness and truth, which is the heavenly marriage, and is that to which men are called ; for the conjunction of goodness and truth is the ground of conjunction with the Lord. Well might the angel command John to write this blessed announcement. For to write it does not mean merely to record it in this book, important as that is ; but it means to inscribe in the heart the blessedness itself of being of the number of those who are not only called outwardly in the letter, but who are called inwardly in the spirit. These are the true sayings of God ; for it is a truth that a new and true church shall be established upon earth, which will be faithful to the Lord, and true to the purpose of her existence. It is an assurance also that those who enter into the heavenly marriage will be conjoined with the Lord, and be blessed through eternity.

10. So overcome was the seer with the grandeur of the message, and with the glory of the angelic messenger who delivered it, that he offered him Divine worship. *And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.* It is not surprising that the celestial being who commanded John to write, declaring the blessedness of being called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, should have called forth in the seer something more than the homage due to a finite being, however exalted. This angel, too, is described as having great power; and when he came down from heaven the earth was lighted with his glory. Yet John had seen many angels, some not less glorious than the one who now stood before him, and had been addressed by several under circumstances seemingly as impressive as those connected with the presence of this heavenly messenger. The occasion was no doubt a providential opportunity of teaching a great lesson, and one which had especial reference to one of the events with which it was connected. The angel who commissioned John to write the present message was he who had cried with a mighty voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen ;” and the fall itself is described in the previous chapter. John’s prostration before the angel may be considered as representing the tendency to creature-worship which is inherent in all minds, but which has manifested itself in that condition of the church represented by Babylon more than in any other. This natural tendency was the origin of the apotheosis and worship of departed heroes by the ancient heathens, and led to the more than human honours

which the Christian church came to render to those whom she had enrolled in the calendar of her saints. All such worship is rebuked by the words of the angel, "See thou do it not;" and the worship of the purely Divine is alone declared to be lawful in his command, "Worship God." But who is God, to whom alone worship is due? The Lord Jesus Christ is the only true object of worship. All in Him is God. His Humanity is Divine, and is one with His eternal Divinity, as the body is one with the soul. In man both soul and body are finite; in Jesus they are infinite. The Humanity of the Lord, and therefore the Lord in His Humanity, is the Lamb; and the Lamb is the husband of His church. And to the church, as the Lamb's wife, the language of inspiration is: "He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Ps. xlv. 11). How different is the angel's statement respecting his own rank, and the relation in which he stood to John, who offered him Divine worship! "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The words of this angel afford direct and positive evidence that angels are but the spirits of glorified men. They teach that angels and men are fellow-servants, and brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. They are both alike finite, and are both alike worshippers of the Infinite; both alike indebted for their blessings to the redemption of Jesus; and both alike interested and active agents in the establishment of His kingdom. They are both witnesses of the truth as it is in Jesus, to whom all truth relates. He is the Truth itself. All truth has its origin in Him, and testifies of Him. The testimony of Jesus is truly the spirit of prophecy. Without reference to Him, prophecy would have no significance; it would give no promise and inspire no hope. Jesus is the very soul of prophecy. His manifestation in the flesh was its first great fulfilment, and is the foundation and source of its ultimate accomplishment in His Second Coming, as a further and still higher means for the salvation of the human race.

11. Another appearance is now presented, which claims our particular attention, for it relates to the leading subject of the prophecy. *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.* He who had just been spoken of as the Lamb, whose marriage was come, and whose wife had made herself ready, now appears as a man of war, with blood-stained garment, followed by the armies of heaven. This transition resembles, though inversely, that which occurs in the fourth chapter, where the Lion of the tribe

of Judah is proclaimed as the one who has prevailed to open the book and loose its seals; and a Lamb appears, and does what the Lion had prevailed to do. Sudden and striking transitions are, as we have had occasion to remark, of frequent occurrence in the course of the vision. This great change in the Lord's appearance is not difficult to account for. The marriage of the Lamb, which is said to have come, has taken place with the church in heaven; but it has not yet been effected with the church on earth. The New Christian Heaven, which is His New Church in heaven, has been formed of those represented by the sealed of the twelve tribes and by the multitude of virgins; and the Lord has entered into conjunction with this church in heaven as His wife. But the New Church is not yet formed on earth.

The New Jerusalem has not yet descended from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Between the marriage of the Lord with the church in the spiritual world, and His marriage with the church in the natural world, some important works must be effected. The power which was ready to devour the man-child, which sent water as a flood after the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, must be overcome. It is with this power, which strives to obstruct the progress of the Lord's work, by preventing, if possible, the establishment of the church on earth, as the orderly sequence of its formation in heaven, that the Rider on the white horse is to make war. And as the Lamb is transformed into the Man of war, so is the Lamb's wife transformed into the army that follows Him, and which, under Him, is to be instrumental in overcoming the opposers of His beneficent work.

All this is connected with one great event, the Lord's Second Advent, which is described by His Coming on the white horse. There is a great difference between this representation of the Lord's Second Advent and the description of it in the Gospel, where it is said He is to appear in the clouds of heaven. Both the description and the representation are to be spiritually understood; and the difference between them will be found to be no discrepancy, but will be seen to express a significant distinction.

The clouds, from their rapid motion, are often in Scripture compared with the chariot and the horse. The Lord is spoken of as the Being "who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. civ. 3); and it is said of Him that He "rideth upon a swift cloud" (Isa. xix. 1). In the same way the Lord is spoken of as riding on His horses and chariots of salvation

(Hab. iii. 8). In the symbolic language of Scripture, both the cloud and the horse are emblematical of truth; the difference being that a cloud means the knowledge of truth, and a horse the understanding of truth. What can be meant by the opened heaven disclosing the Lord riding on a white horse, but that the opening of heaven, both in relation to the church and the individual, enables them to understand Divine Truth, as it is understood in heaven? The name of Him who sat on the white horse indicates this. His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. Jesus Christ is the Eternal Word. But the written Word is the Eternal Word revealed; and what is true of the one is true of the other. The written Word is, in its essential nature, Divine. In its inmost sense it treats of the Lord alone. In its inward or heavenly sense it treats of heaven and heavenly things. The spiritual sense is especially for the use of the church in heaven; as the natural sense is especially for the use of the church on earth. Yet the church on earth is capable of understanding the spiritual sense, although, as compared with the church in heaven, through a glass darkly. By understanding the Word in its heavenly sense, the church on earth is brought into a more intimate relation and closer communion with the church in heaven. The revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word may be said to constitute the Lord's Second Coming. The Lord comes in His character of the Word, the name by which He is here called. His Second Coming, as we have had occasion to show, is not a personal appearance. If not personal, how can He come but by revealing Himself in His Word? It may indeed be said, He has already revealed Himself there. We have the Scriptures: has not the church always known what He has been pleased there to reveal respecting Himself? The church, it is true, has always possessed, and still possesses, the Word; but the church has not always known and understood even its true literal meaning. This meaning, in regard to doctrine, has, in the course of ages, been greatly perverted, and requires to be restored. In regard to the prophecies respecting the Second Coming of the Lord, these have never been understood, because they have been taken literally. Nor can they be understood but by means of the spiritual sense. Yet this sense is not confined to prophecy on this subject, but opens to us a deeper and still more heavenly wisdom than the literal sense, however well understood and profoundly studied, can yield. In regard to prophecy, what is known by students of the prophecy respecting the Lord's Second Advent? They believe that the Lord will come in the clouds, and raise the dead, and judge the world, and

destroy the heavens and the earth, and thus make an end of all things. It was natural that those who understood the Scriptures only in their literal sense should believe all this. But this notion, tenable at the time the prophecy was written, modern science has shown to be untenable. What has the literalist to fall back upon? As with the beginning of Genesis he will shift his ground by little and little, as he is driven from point to point, so he must gradually lose all he contends for, and at last yield to the enemy. Yet the enemy is not science. The enemy, or rather enemies, are those who assail Scripture by means of science, and those who defend Scripture against science. The spiritual sense of the Word removes the ground of contention. It admits the objections of science to the literal fulfilment of these prophecies, and avails itself of the aids which science offers for the better understanding of the higher sense which the Word contains. True science and true religion are ever concordant; for the same light that shines on the path of science shines on that of religion. There is but one true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and the man of science is as much indebted to it as the man of religion, whether he acknowledge it or not. God, who is the Author, is thus also the Interpreter, both of Nature and of Revelation. Yet the true interpretation of nature must precede the true interpretation of Scripture. The Scriptures were of necessity written in accordance with the science of the times. How else could they be either understood or believed? This being the case, they cannot be explained in accordance with science until science has appeared. Until scientific truth is established, the mind cannot be prepared for the reception of the religious truth to which it points, and to which it corresponds. So long as it was understood that the earth was a plane of but small extent, there was no difficulty in believing that the Lord was to come in the clouds, and that all nations were to be gathered before Him. So long as the earth was, as divines delighted to teach, corrupted through sin and effete through age, it was easy to believe that it was hastening to its end. These no longer form a scientific, that is to say, a natural basis for spiritual or religious truth. New science is preparing the way for a new theology; that is, for a new interpretation of Scripture, and, in particular, of prophetic language.

But, although parts of Revelation may have apparently to adapt themselves to new science, it does not follow that Revelation is a debtor to science. Natural knowledge precedes religious truth, according to the law, "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." But this is the sequence of their

appearance, not of their existence. The natural is first in regard to time, but the spiritual is first in regard to end. The spiritual is the cause, the natural is the effect. The natural is the means by which the spiritual collects the materials with which wisdom builds her house; for the natural is the receptacle as well as the effect of the spiritual. For this reason all true science is in a measure sacred, and becomes entirely so when consecrated to the service of religion. As a means of rightly interpreting the Word, and thus ministering to the spiritual interests of mankind, science does homage to the Author of Revelation, and performs its highest and noblest use. All religious truth is contained in Scripture, as all scientific truth is contained in Nature. Theology is nothing more than a true interpretation of Scripture, as science is of Nature. Neither of them has the power of creating, but only of unfolding. The unfolding of the Word discloses its inner spiritual meaning. In its spiritual meaning the Lord comes the second time. His Coming gives, and consists in, a higher and clearer view of Himself and of His kingdom. It exhibits more perfectly His person and character. It shows more clearly what religion is, what the church is, what heaven is. It sheds a new light upon all the subjects of the Bible; on creation and providence; on redemption and salvation. It enables us to see these subjects in the light of heaven, for heaven is opened. It enables us to see spiritually what we otherwise could only understand naturally, and gives an edifying meaning to what, without it, has no intelligible sense at all. For out of the open heaven proceeds the white horse; which is a sign and a promise that, in the new age, the Lord will reveal Himself to the mind of His church through the truths of His Word, seen by the light in which the angels dwell. But the heaven that is opened, is not merely the heaven that is without us, but also the heaven that is within us, the heaven of the inner man, the spiritual mind. Through this heaven the Lord enters into the human mind, and sheds His light, and gives understanding. Through this opened heaven He makes His Second Advent into every individual mind. It was necessary, indeed, that the Lord should come, in the first instance, into our particular mind, prepared by all available outward and inward means for His reception. Through one mind, opened and enlightened to understand the Scriptures in their spiritual as well as their doctrinal sense, the knowledge could be provided by which others may be prepared to seek and receive the light of spiritual discernment. All the Divine purposes are wrought out by the united operation of inward light and outward teaching. Inward light alone,

or the operation of the Spirit, is like light without objects to reflect it. The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. Outward teaching supplies objects on which inward light falls, and by which it is reflected to the eye of the mind. Hence the necessity of an outward Revelation. Outward knowledge is objective truth ; inward light makes the truth subjective. Without an outward Revelation, inward light would impart no knowledge ; without inward light, outward Revelation would give no discernment. But while both are necessary, it is the inward light which explains the outward Revelation. Those who think they have exhaustively explained the Bible when they have shown its grammatical sense, and given its correct literal meaning, are like those who think they have exhaustively explained man, when they have described the structure of his body, and the functions of its different organs. The soul is the man, and the body is only an instrument, though a wonderful and beautiful instrument, for doing his will. The soul of the Word is its spiritual sense ; the literal sense is its body. The Lord is the life of the Word as He is of creation. However wonderful and beautiful the literal sense of the Word may be, it is but the vesture of its spiritual meaning, and is intended to be its instrument of usefulness. Hitherto the Word has been understood in its literal sense only. The existence of a spiritual sense in the Word was generally acknowledged in the primitive church ; but the law of its spiritual interpretation being then unknown, spiritual expositions of Scripture expressed the mind of the expositor, but not necessarily the mind of God. The nature of the spiritual sense of the Word is pointed out in a subsequent verse. This treats of the Word as it is in itself. He that sat upon the white horse was called "Faithful and True." Faithfulness and Truth, which are the same as Goodness and Truth, are the essential principles of the Divine nature, and thence the essential principles of the Word. The righteousness, in which He judges and makes war, includes both goodness and truth in operation. All the Divine judgments, proceeding as they do from goodness and truth, are the decisions of perfect righteousness or justice. All the Divine wars are the conflicts of justice against injustice, of righteousness against unrighteousness ; of good against evil, and of truth against falsity.

12, 13. It is further said of Him who sat on the white horse, that *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns ; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and His name is called The Word of God.* The Lord's eyes are His wisdom, and the

fire, the flame of which they resembled, is His love. The many crowns upon His head are the Divine Truths that proceed from His Love and Wisdom, and by which He governs His church, and reigns in the hearts and minds of His people. These are figures or analogies we have already explained. Others claim our attention. The name of the Rider is given, and yet it is a name that none but Himself knows. This is characteristic both of the personal and of the written Word. No one knows the Infinite but the Infinite. No one knows the written Word but the Eternal Word that revealed it. Its wisdom is infinite ; for the Eternal Word is in it as its inmost essence ; and it is the inexhaustible fountain of wisdom to angels and men. Although the Lord alone knows it in its depth and perfection, finite beings are not excluded from all knowledge of its wisdom. We may say of the Word what the Lord said of the Father, “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matt. xi. 27). Yet no man can come to the Son, except the Father draw him (John vi. 44). The Lord alone knows and can teach men His Word. Men can only understand His revealed wisdom by the light of the wisdom which revealed it. “In Thy light shall we see light” (Ps. xxxvi. 9). And they can only receive the light of the Lord in their understandings in proportion as they receive His love in their hearts. There is no true light where there is no true love. The Lord is Infinite Wisdom. Love, which is the Father, can alone draw men unto Wisdom, which is the Son ; because there is no finite wisdom, but the wisdom of love. Without love there is no life or soul in truth. Men lose the understanding of truth, when they cease to have the love of goodness ; and they adopt falsity instead of truth, when they come to love evil instead of goodness. Truth is, indeed, nothing but goodness intellectually perceived. The truth of God is to us the knowledge of the goodness of God. His light is the light of His Divine Wisdom from His Divine Love. And as it comes from love, it is intended to lead us to love. The truth relating to any thing is the knowledge and perception of its goodness or use. The use of anything is the good we can extract from it, or which we can acquire and do by means of it. Religious truth has therefore no other use, as an end, than to guide our steps in the way of truth, which is righteousness. Further than it leads to this, it leads to nothing useful. As the life of truth is goodness, the life of falsity is evil. Falsity is the light with which evil clothes itself, and by which it recommends itself to our acceptance. True, it is a false light ; and being so, it leads to a false good. Those who follow its teaching to

its consequences, come ultimately into the state into which they call evil good, and good evil, and put darkness for light, and light for darkness. It may seem severe to say so; but every religious error has had its origin in some evil that shunned the light of truth which condemned it, and sheltered itself under the darkness which concealed or excused it. Yet among Christians religious errors are drawn from, or confirmed by, the Bible. But they are drawn from or confirmed by the letter, which killeth separated from the spirit, which giveth life. The spirit is to the letter what goodness is to truth, what the end is to the means, what the essence is to the form. When the letter is severed from the spirit, it can be made to teach not only what the spirit does not teach, but what is opposite to its teaching. The two great errors of the Christian church, of which we have had occasion to speak, owe their existence to the severing of the letter from the spirit of the Word, and construing the letter, not according to the spirit of God, but according to the spirit of man. The power of opening and shutting heaven would never have been ascribed to a single man, nor would salvation ever have been assigned to a single grace, if the letter of the Word had not been severed from the spirit of its teaching, and forced to support human opinion against some of the most direct teaching of both the letter and the spirit of the Word. He who sat on the white horse was therefore clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. The vesture of the Word is its literal sense, which clothes its spiritual sense. Human errors and perversions stain it with blood, the blood of slain truths. Human interpretations that destroy the essential truths it teaches, deprive it of its life and of its life-giving power. The blood-stained vesture of Him who sat upon the white horse, is a symbol of the violence done both to the Word of God, and to the souls of men. When, on the assumed authority of the Scriptures, men are directed to seek salvation in that which cannot save, religion has ceased to be a true guide, and the church has ceased to be a true church. When this is the case, the church comes to its end; and a new church is instituted, that the means of salvation may be provided. The Lord's Coming is to effect this object. As the Lord never leaves Himself without a witness, nor men without a church, He always provides that the end of one shall be followed by the beginning of another. The crisis is the judgment. Judgment separates the true from the false members of the church in the spiritual world, and it separates truth from error among men in the natural world. This is the reason the Lord is now represented as coming to judgment. For the same reason He is described as the Word; for it

is the Word that judges. Its laws and principles are the tests by which the church and its members are tried, the standards by which they are measured. The Lord, as the Word, is described representatively, in relation to both the good and the evil, the true and the false. His Glorious Person is the aspect He presents to the one ; His blood-stained garment is that under which He appears to the other. This double aspect is characteristic of judgment, which is effected upon both the righteous and the wicked. In reference to His First Coming, which was also a time of judgment, He is similarly described : " Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength ? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat ? I have trodden the wine-press alone ; and of the people there was none with Me : for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come " (Is. lxiii. 1-4). The anger and vengeance ascribed to the Lord are of course only apparent. He has no anger : " Fury is not in Me." It is our anger reflected. So with the blood upon His garments. It comes from the wine-press ; it is the blood of those who are judged ; the false and evil principles by which the falsifiers of truth have stained the letter of the Word.

14. *And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* As the Lord Himself, immediately after being spoken of as a Lamb, whose marriage was come, is represented as a man of war, with blood-stained garments, so those who collectively form His church, which is called His wife, are represented as the armies in heaven, following Him upon white horses. These armies do not here mean the entire angelic heaven, but the New Christian Heaven, or the New Church in heaven, as conjoined to the Lord in the interior understanding of the Word, and in its pure and genuine truths, He whom they follow being the Word of God. Their understanding of the Word are the horses on which they ride ; and the pure and genuine truths of the Word are the fine linen, white and clean, with which they are clothed. The identity of these armies of heaven with the wife of the Lamb is indicated by their being, like her, arrayed in fine linen, white and clean.

Heaven is described and represented under characters and forms

according to its different functions and uses. Heaven is called the Lord's wife, His body, His temple, His kingdom, His army. Heaven is the Lord's wife, as conjoined to Him by love; His body, as the Grand Man, the most perfect image of His own Glorious Body; His temple, as the place of His more immediate presence; His kingdom, as being under the government of His love and wisdom; His army, as being instrumental, under Him, in opposing and overcoming evil and falsity. The angels of heaven are called armies or hosts, as the Lord is called the Lord of hosts, because, as the recipients of His truth, the ordained myriads of the just made perfect are instruments in His hand for assisting the church on earth, generally and individually, to engage successfully in the warfare of the Christian life, which is a war against self, the world, and the flesh, these, in their various forms, being the enemies of the Lord, of heaven, and of the church. Those who confirm themselves in and indulge the love of these evils, are personal enemies of the Lord and of men; and they are represented by the beast, and by the kings of the earth and their armies, who were gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. As representative of what took place in the spiritual world, previous to the Last Judgment, this describes the opposition of those who were in evil and error to those who were in goodness and truth. Something of the nature of a conflict took place between the army of the kings of the earth and the armies of Him who sat on the white horse.

As the Rider on the white horse is called The Word of God, the armies of heaven, abstractly considered, represent the truths of the Word. These are the real instruments of the Lord's power. Indeed, it is evident that those who are spoken of as the agents of judgment are not to be understood as personally judging. When the Lord told the twelve apostles, that in His kingdom they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, He spoke to them, and respecting them, in their representative character, as the truths by which judgment is effected. The armies that followed Him whose name is The Word of God, are therefore all the heavenly truths of the Word, which follow and maintain the cause of the Lord and His Word, which is the cause of truth and righteousness. These armies of heaven represent the truths of the Word as they are perceived in heaven, thus, its spiritual sense; and the fine linen, clean and white, with which they are clothed, are those truths as outwardly manifested in their bright intelligence and spotless righteousness. They, too rode upon horses; representatively teaching, that the spiritual truth

of the Word will be received intellectually by those who form the New Church, which the Lord now comes to establish.

15, 16. As the leader of His armies, the Lord, as the Word, is characteristically described as going forth conquering and to conquer. *And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.* We have already seen (i. 6), what is almost self-evident, that the sword that went out of the Lord's mouth is the Divine Truth that proceeds from Him, and which acts as a sword, when it comes into conflict with error, and as a rod of iron, when it comes into conflict with evil, which are meant by the nations that are ruled with it. His treading the wine-press is the judgment itself. But here the image is presented of the trampling of enemies under the feet of the conqueror. Yet these things, which are too real among sinful men, are only appearances with the righteous God. His judgments are felt by his enemies as if they were vindictive, although in themselves they are full of mercy. That mercy is directed by wisdom, but is never influenced by wrath, because there is no wrath in the Lord. This is expressed symbolically in the name written on His vesture and on His thigh. For even in the literal sense of the Word, which is meant by His vesture, but especially in its spiritual sense, which is meant by His thigh, His Divine character is shown to be pure Wisdom and Love. As Divine Wisdom He is King; as Divine Love He is Lord. But He is both King of kings and Lord of lords. For He is the Supreme Truth and the Supreme Love, the Author of all truth and love in and among angels and men. And He who is the Fountain of love and wisdom to angels and men, is the One Great Being who made and rules all things.

17, 18. After this John says, *And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.* Again, we have the image of war, the fowls after the slaughter, feeding on the carcases of the slain. Yet there is something in this that suggests a deeper meaning. Not merely the birds of prey, but all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, are called to the supper of the great God. There is a Divine

meaning, which we need to ascertain. The slain of the Lord are not persons, but principles. He wars only against evil and error. But evil and error are the perversions of goodness and truth. When the evil and error are slain, the goodness and truth, of which they are perversions, remain. The principles of the church have been perverted. They must be brought into judgment, that the evil may be severed from the good, the false from the true. When this is effected, the good and true, which those of the closing dispensation had perverted, are restored and offered to those who shall be of the new. These are meant by the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven. Fowls are emblems of those affections which have truth for their object. The invitation is really to all who have an affection for truth. It is these affections that are fed. They are spiritual or heavenly affections; they are the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven. And the feast provided satisfies all the affections; for the invitation is not, as in human warfare, to the birds of prey, but to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven. The invitation is given by an angel standing in the sun. In heaven there is a Sun, whose heat is love and whose light is wisdom, a Sun which vivifies and enlightens the moral and intellectual faculties of angels and men. That Sun is the Lord Himself, as the Sun of Righteousness. It may not be necessary to suppose that this was the sun which John beheld. He saw at least its representative image, and in it a representative of the Lord Himself, the angel of the covenant, the Humanity, which is the great Medium of conjunction between God and man. The Lord was now about to enter into a new covenant with His people. This was a marriage covenant; and this was the marriage supper to which are invited all, whosoever they be, who love the truth for its own sake, and for the sake of the good to which it leads. The good of truth is indeed that of which they are invited to partake; for the fowls are called that they may eat the *flesh* of kings and of captains. Truth is the immediate object of perception, but good is its end and aim. This supper of the great God is therefore the provision which the Divine Goodness has made for those whose affection for truth has its origin and its end in goodness. Not that the Lord's love is limited or partial; but no others will hear or receive the invitation. Those only who have a sincere affection for truth are disposed to receive the Lord at His Coming, and to enter into a covenant with Him by sacrifice. These are meant by the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, and are the "effectually called." But what a singular feast is that to which the fowls are invited! Yet it is a rich feast to those whom the fowls represent, when the spiritual

meaning of the food provided for them is understood. Kings mean the truths of the church as derived from the Word ; captains, the knowledges of good and truth ; mighty men, erudition from doctrine : horses mean the understanding of the Word ; those who sit on horses, wisdom from the understanding of the Word ; the free mean knowledge of truth drawn immediately from the Word, and the bond, knowledge of truth derived mediately through other channels ; and small and great mean all these principles greater and less in measure. The eating of the flesh of all, from kings to the least of their people, means the appropriation of good principles of every kind, and degree, which the Lord gives, by the truths of the Word and doctrine derived from it, to those whose affections desire or hunger after them. These are they who are invited to the supper of the great God, and this is the provision which is made for them.

19-21. The opposing army is now described. *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth : and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.* In the sixteenth chapter we read of three unclean spirits like frogs, that came out of the mouth of the dragon and of his beasts, going forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to get them into a place called Armageddon, to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. This is that conflict. Here the hostile armies are gathered together. It is the last effort of error and evil against the power of goodness and truth, and therefore against the Word which teaches them. The three unclean spirits like frogs are directly and violently opposed to the three pure Spirits of the Word, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of righteousness. And those who maintain and defend those errors against those truths, when the truth is manifested, as it is in the person of Him who sat on the white horse, are the enemies who fight against the Word of God. This last conflict, however, is rather that of evil with the good of the Word than of falsity with its truth. The opposing armies are formed of those who have lived, as well as believed, in the dogma of faith alone ; and who, trusting to the imputation of the Lord's righteousness, have neglected to acquire righteousness from Him by doing His will.

They concern themselves little about practical religion, and live securely under the shadow of their creed. They have been deceived, but willingly, by the miracles wrought by the false prophet, who has lulled the conscience into a dead sleep by the cry of Peace, peace, where there was no peace. The result is described symbolically. In the conflict with Him who sat upon the white horse, whose name is called The Word of God, the beast and the false prophet were taken, and were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. To know what is meant by their being taken and cast alive into the lake, we have only to reflect what is to be understood by being killed and being dead. In regard to the good, death is the extinction in them of whatever is evil; in regard to the evil, death is the extinction in them of whatever is good. Judgment effects this separation. Those in whom this separation is effected are meant by the slain. But there is a class of evil persons in whom this separation cannot be effected. Those who are guilty of profanation, which consists in so mixing what is true with what is false, and what is holy with what is impure, that they cannot be separated. These are meant by those who were taken, and cast alive into the burning lake. This lake is a state rather than a place. The fire and the brimstone are the evil love and the false thought, which constitute the very life of the ungodly. When the ungodly are stript of their disguises and freed from their outward restraints, they fall, or rather cast themselves, into hell as a place, which is the outbirth and image of their own state. While the beast and the false prophet were taken, the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse. The Divine Truth of the Word disclosed the true character of the false persuasions, from which the evil opposed themselves to the truth, and especially of the evil which these falsities defended. Slain by the sword of truth, all the fowls of the air were filled with their flesh. These are not the fowls that the angel called to the supper, nor have they the same meaning. The flesh of the first feast means the principle of goodness; the flesh of the second feast is the principle of evil. The fowls invited to the first feast, which are called the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, are the heavenly affections of truth and goodness; those which came to the second are the opposite affections of evil and falsity.

CHAPTER XX.

THE early and greater part of this chapter treats of what is called the millennium. It may, therefore, be useful to offer a few preliminary remarks on that subject.

Founded upon its merely literal sense, an opinion has been introduced by some, almost from the commencement of the church, that the Lord, at His Second Coming, is to reign personally on the earth for a thousand years. His Advent is to be followed by the resurrection of the righteous; and these risen saints, with those who are alive, are to form the subjects of His millennial kingdom. During the time of this reign Satan, who, like the beast and the false prophet, had been taken, is to remain bound, and shut up in the bottomless pit, so that he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years are past. After a thousand years of peace and happiness, Satan, loosed from his prison, is to go out and deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth; and these, in number as the sand of the sea, are to come up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city, when fire is to come down from heaven and devour them. The Devil that deceived them is then to be cast into the lake of fire, where are the beast and the false prophet. The second resurrection and the judgment are then to take place; and the whole drama is to be concluded with the end of the world.

It would be easy to show that this notion is inconsistent with even the most literal interpretation of the prophecy. In the first place, it is only those who have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and who have not received the mark of the beast, that are to be the subjects of the first resurrection. This description can hardly be supposed to include the whole of the righteous who have lived since the beginning of the world. In the second place, although the first resurrection is mentioned, there is nothing said of a second, unless it be assumed that the second resurrection is meant by the sea giving up its dead, and death and hell delivering up the dead which were in them. But this does not answer to a resurrection of all the wicked of the whole earth from their graves. And what are we to make of the hordes that Satan is to gather together and lead against the saints? For Satan, loosed, goes out to deceive the "nations" which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle. The theory of a personal reign of Christ upon the earth, with the risen saints for His subjects, is founded on a literal apprehension of a prophecy that was never in-

tended to be literally understood, and which is impossible to be literally fulfilled.

We have already had occasion to state that the scene of these transactions is in the spiritual world. The relation itself is evidence of this. It is the *souls* of those who have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus that are to reign with Christ. They had indeed obtained the resurrection ; but this, rightly understood, is an additional evidence of the truth of what we have now remarked. For, as we shall have the opportunity to show, the Scripture resurrection is not the rising of the natural body, which, once laid aside, is never resumed. We now proceed to consider the contents of the chapter.

1-3. In the previous chapter we read that the beast and the false prophet were taken, and were cast into the burning lake, and that the remnant of the army they had gathered to fight against Him that sat upon the white throne and against His army were slain. But the dragon himself, in whose cause the beast and his army fought, is still at large ; and of his captivity this part of the vision treats. *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.* It is one of the characteristics of the Lord that He has the keys of hell and of death (i. 18). Although the bottomless pit is different from the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, yet both are parts of the kingdom of darkness, which is subject to the power of the Universal Ruler. This angel must therefore represent the Lord. The key and the chain are only the symbols of His power, as it acts upon the ungodly. The Divine power is ever the same ; its different aspects arise from the difference of those on whom it operates. The Lord draws the righteous with bands of love (Hosea xi. 4) ; He binds the wicked with chains of truth. Yet He does not love one and hate the other. He draws the righteous because they receive His love ; He binds the wicked because they disobey His truth. The truth which is known, but is unloved and unpractised, becomes a chain that binds the soul in fetters of iron to the kingdom of darkness. Yet, strictly speaking, it is not the truth that binds the evil as captives to their dark abodes ; it is the truth perverted : for evil turns truth into falsity, or light into darkness ; and if the light that is in men be darkness, how great is that darkness ! The light of truth quenched by falsehood is the darkness that reigns in hell. It is not the darkness of ignorance. This brings no condemnation or captivity. Those only who, while knowing the truth, wilfully live an evil life, are condemned by it. The chains of everlasting darkness in which, according to Peter and Jude, the angels that kept not their

first estate are reserved unto the judgment of the great day, are the fetters which they themselves had forged from the truth that would have made them free. If not the same event, one of the same nature is described in this place. For, *he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.* The binding of the dragon is thus temporary. He is reserved unto the judgment of the great day which is yet to come; he is not yet cast into the burning lake. What, then, are we to understand by this temporary restraint?

4. The scene of this transaction is that region of the spiritual world which is between heaven and hell, which we have spoken of as the intermediate state. Here all souls enter at death, where those who have not passed into their final state are reserved unto the judgment of the great day, and where the judgment itself takes place. The time to which the prophecy now relates is the eve of judgment. The great white throne is to be set, and the dead, small and great, are to stand before the Judge that sits upon it. Events of the nature of judgments have, indeed, been going forward; but these are the searchings and separations that precede the final judgment. The binding and isolation of the old serpent is one of these. It is a separation of the evil from the good, in order that both may be prepared for the coming judgment—the evil that they may be deprived of their assumed good, and prepared for hell; the good that they may be delivered from their involuntary evil, and prepared for heaven. The bottomless pit, which is now opened for the reception of the old dragon, was opened, as we read in the ninth chapter, by the angel who sounded the fifth trumpet. But then it was opened to let the army of locusts come out; now it is opened to cast the dragon in. The immediate purpose to be answered by the removal of the serpent is, that the saints may be allowed to reign with the Lord in peace. Of these we have read in the sixth chapter. It is there recorded that when the fifth seal was opened, John saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held. And when they cried for deliverance, it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. The time for their deliverance has now come, and they are to be brought up out of their prison and set upon thrones. *And I saw thrones, and they sat*

upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. These supposed martyrs are spiritual, though they may also have been natural, martyrs. Spiritual martyrs are those who, in the Christian warfare, have been faithful unto death, and are now to receive the crown of life. They have also suffered from the dominant errors of their times; and after death they are preserved from the power of the seducing spirits of the dragon, till they can be prepared for and raised into heaven. The thrones to which they were raised are the heavenly truths in which they have been confirmed and established; and the judgment they are to exercise is the judgment they are thereby enabled to form and act upon all matters of truth and goodness, of faith and love. To live and reign with Christ is to be conjoined to Him by love. The thousand years of their reign do not mean any definite period of time; for in the spiritual world there is no time. State is there what time is here; and the quality of state is expressed by numbers. A thousand means therefore the maturity and fulness of the state which will make them fit for entering into the kingdom of heaven. With God a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. As with the Eternal, so in the eternal world, there is no fixed duration of time. Its inhabitants know nothing of time, except as an appearance, which is the measure of state.

5, 6. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. The first resurrection, over the subjects of which the second death hath no power, is, spiritually, resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. Death has no more dominion over them. They are freed from sin, and therefore from that death which is the consequence of sin. The rest of the dead are not the unrighteous, who are liable to the second death, but those who have not passed through the same tribulation, and do not therefore enjoy the same triumph. Those who obtain the first resurrection—not first in the order of time, but first in rank and excellence—are the celestial, who are principled in love to the Lord, and are therefore called priests of God and of Christ; the rest are the spiritual, who are principled in love to the neighbour. In the

symbolic language of Scripture these are called kings; and, though not so named here, they are so to be understood.

7-10. But when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. The binding and loosing of Satan are not to be regarded as Divine acts, which are determined only by the will of God, but as parts of the general operation of His providence, as it acts in furtherance of His benevolent work of salvation. Judgment is one of these acts, and evil spirits have a part to play in the great drama. They are but too willing agents in inciting and tempting the righteous; and their power is ruled, and their purposes are over-ruled, for some good to the righteous, and as far as possible to themselves. Their evil use is to do that work which the Lord declared Satan desired to do to Peter, when He said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke xxii. 31). It is to sift the righteous, and remove the chaff from their wheat, that Satan is permitted to exert his influence with them. When his influence is inconsistent with this evil use, it is providentially prevented or moderated. It is solely in compliance with this law that the binding and loosing of Satan are here mentioned as having taken place. But evil spirits not only sift the righteous, but they devastate the wicked; and this they do by inciting them to evil, so that they throw off disguises, and manifest their true character. This is the evil use which Satan is now permitted to do. Loosed from his prison, he now goeth out to deceive the nations, and incite them to make war against the saints. The symbolic character of this part of the Apocalypse, and even its meaning, may be learnt from a similar prediction in Ezekiel, which must be understood as having received its fulfilment at the time of the Lord’s First Advent. In chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine we find a prophecy against Gog and Magog. While the Lord’s people Israel dwell in safety, Gog comes from his place out of the north parts, with a mighty army, which covers the land as a cloud. The end of this mighty and terrible host is the same as that of the Apocalyptic army. The Lord rains upon it an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, and fire, and brimstone. This is a prophecy of what “shall be in the latter days.” These were the latter days of the Jewish church, as those of the Revelation are the latter days of the Christian church.

church. What can these armies be but a flood of error and ungodliness invading the church and threatening its destruction? And this is equally true of the latter days of both the Jewish and the Christian dispensations. When we know that the earth means the church, we can see in these predictions the condition of the church at the time of its end. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" When love and faith fail from among the sons of men, the church among them fails also; for without these what is the church but a form and a name? Yet the church itself never ceases to exist. When it fails with one generation, it is providentially raised up in another. Evil and error, the Gog and Magog of the latter days, may come *up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city*, but only the assailants themselves are destroyed. However widespread the desolation, a remnant is preserved. This, though invisible to human eyes, is the case with the church on earth, and is exhibited openly in the spiritual world, before those who are in the spirit, and have their spiritual sight opened to behold it. The church on earth is there in those who have passed from it into the eternal world. The righteous who have passed out of time into eternity are the sealed of the twelve tribes, and the company by the sea of glass, and the armies of heaven upon white horses, and the camp of the saints. And the unrighteous who have passed out of time into eternity are the locusts, and the dragon, and the scarlet woman, and the armies of Gog and Magog. In the camp of the saints, and the armies of the nations, we see the two opposite sides of the church presented in their ultimate condition, and in their actual and relative state. Truth is compassed by error, good by evil. This is the state of the church in the latter days. As it is exhibited in the spiritual world, so is it spiritually in the natural world. It is to the vision which appeared in the world of spirits that we direct our attention. We have said that the permitted operation of evil spirits is for the purpose of laying open the states of the evil as well as of the good. This effect is described by their being devoured by fire from heaven. The appearance is the effect of the state of the minds of those who are said to be consumed by the fire. The fire that devours the wicked is the fire of their own evil hearts,—the love or lust of evil. That heaven from which it comes down is in themselves. The interior of the mind of every one is created to be an image of heaven, and the exterior of the mind is created to be an image of the world. When the interior of the mind of a wicked man is laid open,

and acts without restraint, as it is sure to do in the spiritual world, it rains down snares, and fire and brimstone, which devour the fair appearances and seeming moralities that may have adorned the outward man, while the passions were held in check. This was the effect on those who had been deceived by Satan. *The Devil, that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* The dragon is called the Devil and Satan, as uniting in himself the two elements of sin and of hell itself, evil and falsehood. When the dragon goes out to deceive the nations, he is called Satan; when he has deceived them, he is called the Devil, and under this name he is now cast into the lake. Falsehood seduces, and it seduces to evil. Evil seduces by means of what is false. Evil is that which casts into the burning lake. Error may be innocent, for it may be unintentional. It may even be virtuous, for it may be the object of sincere belief. But evil, when it is known to be evil, and united to falsehood, is intentional, and is the state and the fruit of a corrupt heart. When this is brought out, it casts the soul into the lake which is but the ultimated condition of its own interior state.

11. But we come now to the judgment itself, which is deeply impressive and instructive, in both its general and its individual aspect. *And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.* In the fourth chapter John saw a throne set in heaven, and Him that sat on it. In treating of that part of the vision, we stated that the throne there set was an emblem of judgment; but that it there represented judgment in its beginning, while the great white throne which the Seer now beheld represented judgment in its completion. All the intervening words have been the searchings, unfoldings, and separations which are the means of reducing all to that singleness of state, of either good or evil, which brings them to a state of final judgment. Separation, which precedes judgment, is described in the Gospel by the separation of the tares and the wheat, of the faithful and the unfaithful servants, of the wise and the foolish virgins, of the sheep and the goats. The subject which now comes before us is not the separation of the good and the evil, but their removal from the middle state to their final abode; the good to heaven, answering to the state which has been perfected in them, the evil to the opposite place, which is but the outward condition, answering to their inward state. The Judge and the judgment are sufficient at present to engage our attention. The throne is the emblem of judgment. "The Lord

shall endure for ever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment; and He shall judge the world in righteousness; He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Ps. ix. 7, 8). "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth" (Ps. ix. 16). His judgments are the decisions of infinite love and wisdom. These are written in symbolic characters on the throne itself. Its greatness symbolizes the love, and its whiteness, the wisdom of the judgments that proceed from it. "True and righteous are Thy judgments" (Rev. xvi. 7). We will not at present speak of the passing away of heaven and earth, further than to say, that it predicts, in symbolic language, the passing away of the imaginary heaven and its earth in the world of spirits, of which we have already spoken, and of the church on earth, both internal and external. The new heaven and new earth which succeed the old will afford an opportunity of further considering both of these subjects.

12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Before we consider the judgment, let us regard the Judge. God is the Judge. But "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10). Therefore God and Christ are one. In another statement by the same apostle, the two names are used indifferently. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST. For it is written, As I live, saith the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 10-12). God alone can judge men; for He alone knows the secrets of the heart; and it is because Jesus Christ is God, and needeth not that any should testify of man, for He knows what is in man (John ii. 25), that He can judge the world. Before Him therefore stand the dead, small and great. The dead, now assembled before the throne of judgment, are those who had passed through natural death, and were now in the middle state, where all judgment takes place. They do not include all who had ever lived in the world, nor even all who had lived from the beginning of the Christian church. The openly wicked had been cast into the lake, and the confirmed good had been carried to Mount Zion. Those only of a mixed character, and who could therefore live together in outward communion, and remain in the middle state, were subjected to the general judgment. These, small and great, of whatever condition and quality, now stand before God. The means and the process of

judgment are subjects of deep interest ; for they are the same in all cases ; the same therefore to which each one of us shall be subjected. The books were opened. What books were these ? The human mind itself is a book in which every thought, word, and action is written. When opened and read in that light which makes all things manifest, every act which has been done, ever with the motive which prompted and the thought which directed it, will be found traced in characters more clear than those of a written book, and with a meaning more precise and certain than any that human language could express. This results from the nature of the mind itself. As an active power, the mind is just what it has become by the use or abuse of its faculties. Affections and thoughts are not things laid up in the mind, but states and forms of the mind itself. These are capable of being modified or changed during the life of the body. After death they become fixed, as if crystallized or indurated, and so remain for ever. These are the books that are opened at the judgment, and from the records of which all are judged.

But another book was opened, which is the book of life. The books first mentioned are the books of men ; this book is the book of God. Men are judged out of those things which are written in their own books ; but their judgment is according to the agreement or disagreement of the things written in their own books with the things that are written in the book of God. Those whose books agree with the book of God, or, what is the same, those whose minds agree with the mind of God, are judged to life ; but those whose books or minds disagree with the book and mind of God, are judged to death. The book of God, it deserves to be remarked, is called the book of life. It is never called the book of death. Men's books are the books of death when they disagree with God's book, which is the book of life. The *names* of men are written in the book of life, when their *characters* are in agreement with its principles of life, which are love to God and charity to men. "I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. iv. 3). It is only by being written in this book that we can stand in the judgment. Daniel, speaking of the last times, says, "At that time Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (xii. 1). In one respect all are written in the book of life. All are designed for heaven. All from the moment of their birth are written in the book of life ; and all who die in childhood enter into life. Only by living contrary to the law of life are their names

blotted out of the book of life. “ Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book ” (Ex. xxxii. 33). “ Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous ” (Ps. lxix. 28). On the same principle that the living are written in the book of life, and the dead are not, the heavenly have their names written in heaven (Luke x. 20), and the earthly are written in the earth (Jer. xvii. 13).

If the book of life is regarded as being the revealed Word of God, only those to whom it has been known will be judged by it. Yet we are to reflect, that the laws of God are universal laws. As written in the Word, they are but a clearer revelation of laws which He has, in some way and to some extent, written on the human heart, and which are more or less clearly recognized by every existing religion. “ For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse ” (Rom. i. 20). This we know, that God is infinitely wise and good, and that justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne.

13, 14. In conformity with the imagery of the prophecy we find that those who are to be judged come from places where they had lain or been confined. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* It would seem as if those who had previously risen had come out of the earth ; and that these now raised up come from the sea and from hell. The symbolic character of the description may be inferred from this among other particulars. On the principle that places signify states, the places from which the dead come to be judged evidently describe their character. In Scripture the sea is considered as surrounding the land, and those who live on its islands are spoken of as being “ far off ” upon the sea. The dead whom the sea gave up are those who have been in a state of comparative ignorance and simplicity, people not evil but ignorant, not careless but superficial, good natural or external men. But those whom death and hell deliver up are the wicked and impious, who are dead in trespasses and sins, and who are in the false persuasion that comes from evil. The word *hades*, rendered hell, and, in the margin, the grave, does not here properly mean either. It evidently means a state rather than a place, and refers to a particular class of the wicked in the middle state. Death and hell are therefore the evil and the false, the wicked and the unbelieving. These were judged every one according to their works.

The standard of duty, by which every one is judged, is a purely practical one. Not faith, nor piety, nor even love, but work is the true criterion of character. All religion has relation to life. Everything else which religion enjoins has this for its end. Even love to God, the highest Christian grace, finds its true end only in practical love to the neighbour. The love of God is the love of the highest, purest, most disinterested goodness. Only so far as we love these do we love God. Only so far as we practise these do we work the works of God. And only by working the works of God can we enter into the kingdom of God. Those whose works were evil are said to be cast into the lake of fire. Their final state is one of confirmed self-love and self-delusion. The love of self is the hatred of others. It is the opposite of love to God. And as love to the Lord is heaven, the love of self is hell. One is the fire that re-creates and gladdens; the other is the fire that disintegrates and torments. This is truly and awfully the second death.

15. But not only these, but *whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* How true and how impressive is this simple statement! God keeps no book of doom. In His volume all are written for life. All whose life is in conformity with its Divine laws are written therein, and enter into life eternal. All who are not written in that book, all whose character is not in harmony with its laws of love and duty, are of necessity cast, or rather cast themselves, into the lake of fire. He who wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that all should turn from their wickedness and live, desires the exclusion of none from the book of life. He who came that men might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, can desire nothing else than that all should be found written in His book of life, and thus have their names written also in heaven. Nothing but their own evil and unrighteous life can make them subjects of the kingdom of darkness. How solemn and yet how salutary is the reflection, that even infinite power, acting from infinite love, cannot save the unrighteous! Nor is this the case because, as is assumed, justice compels God to condemn and eternally punish the wicked. It is not God's justice, but their own injustice, that is the cause of their condemnation. If they could cease to be unjust, they would cease to be unhappy. Divine justice would then no longer be opposed to them, because they would no longer be opposed to it. All its supposed claims against them for their past debts would be cancelled in a moment. But these debts, which have cast them into prison, keep them there, because they are written, not in the book

of God's remembrance, but in the book of the memory of their own essential life, the life of their ruling love, and thence of their thought, and of their words and actions.

CHAPTER XXI.

WE now come to the concluding act of the great Apocalyptic drama, to which everything has been tending, in which every mysterious circumstance finds its solution, and which crowns the whole with more than dramatic grandeur and effect.

1. *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.* So numerous are the instances in Scripture of great changes, national and ecclesiastical, being described by changes in the earth and the heavens, and even in some cases by their destruction and re-creation, that no thoughtful reader of the Revelation can entertain a doubt of the figurative or spiritual character of this prophetic declaration. Yet it may be necessary, if not for proof, at least for explanation, to show how clearly the Scriptures themselves point to this conclusion, and how much light they afford to guide us to the true and exact meaning of the sublime imagery of a new heaven and a new earth. The best and most satisfactory way of ascertaining the meaning of a prophecy is to compare it with similar predictions which have received their explanation in their fulfilment.

We need not dwell on the passages which speak of the heavens being shaken, and the earth being moved out of her place (Isa. xiii. 13); of the earth reeling to and fro like a drunkard, and the moon being confounded, and the sun ashamed (xxiv. 20, 23); of the earth being without form and void, and the heavens having no light; of the earth mourning, and the heavens above being black (Jer. iv. 23, 28); of the heaven and earth being shaken when the Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem (Joel iii. 16); of heaven being rolled together as a scroll, and all their host falling down (Isa. xxxiv. 4). In all these instances heaven and earth have evidently what is called a figurative, or what we call a spiritual meaning, the same meaning they have everywhere in Scripture, and therefore here in the Revelation; but it is not so evident from the context, or from the events to which they relate, what that meaning is. One other passage in Isaiah gives a more certain light, since it

forms part of a prophecy respecting the Coming of the Lord, and the establishment of the Christian church, when the Jewish church had come to its end, “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath ; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner : but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished. . . . I have put My words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people” (li. 6, 16). Heaven and earth are evidently employed here as figures of the church ; the heavens that passed away, and the earth that waxed old, meaning the Jewish church ; and the heavens which the Lord was to plant, and the earth whose foundations He was to lay, meaning the Christian church. But the most exact parallel to the statement in the Revelation is that in the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth : and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create : for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. . . . For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain” (lxv. 17, 18 ; lxvi. 22). It is clear from the context that this prophecy relates to the time of the Lord’s Coming in the flesh. The change which is predicted can therefore mean nothing but the commencement of the Christian church, to succeed the Jewish, which had come to its end or consummation.

With these passages before us, the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, as announced in this part of the Revelation, can consistently be understood to refer only to the establishment of a New Christian church, when that which succeeded the Jewish had fled away from the face of Him that sat on the great white throne. There is commonly something in the form of a prediction, which enables us to ascertain whether, at least, it is to be understood literally or figuratively. Predictions of the end of the world, besides the internal evidence they afford of their spirituality, are always connected with the prediction, either expressed or understood, of another event, which hardly any imagine is to be accomplished literally. When the world is destroyed, it is to be replaced by a new creation. The famous prediction of the end of the world by the Apostle Peter has both these evidences of its figurative character. In his Second Epistle (iii. 10), he tells us that “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ;

in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." This has, more than perhaps any other, the appearance of being a matter-of-fact description. Yet it does not, even taken literally, teach the total destruction of the earth. The apostle compares the "last days" to those of Noah, and tells us that "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (verses 6, 7). If the two events are of the same nature, there is no reason to fear, or to expect, the final destruction which some look for; since in the days of Noah it was not the heavens and the earth but the people that perished. But the flood of Noah was not a natural deluge; and the fire of the days of the Son of Man is not a natural element. Both are "figures" of the end of which the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks: "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (ix. 26). The difference is that one perished by a flood of falsities, and the other by the fire of evil love. But while he declares the coming destruction of the heaven and the earth which now are, Peter in his second Epistle, like John in the Revelation, gives the certain hope of a new creation, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (iii. 13).

It is the common belief that there will be an end of the present world; but few ever think of the creation of a new earth; and when they do, they find the new earth to be only an embarrassment. The destruction of the world, according to the common faith, is to end the race of Adam, and complete the family of Christ. The Lord's mediatorial reign is then to end. The Son is to give up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. For what purpose then is this new creation? Some suppose that the new earth is to be the abode of the risen saints; others, willing to take this part of the prophecy spiritually, while they adhere to the literal sense of the other part, think that the new earth means the new earthly bodies of the risen saints! There is another indication that the creation of a new earth, as announced by John, is not to be literally understood. On the new earth there is to be no more sea. An earth without water could not be inhabited by human beings, unless they were entirely different from those who live on the present earth. But if the new earth is to be more perfect than the old, and its inhabitants

more happy, the absence of a sea must be understood to be an advantage, as contributing to their convenience and enjoyment. This to us is inconceivable. If, however, we regard the new earth as the figure of a new church, we may find that the absence of a sea is the absence of an imperfection. In treating of the sea that gave up its dead, we remarked that the sea is symbolic of the Gentiles, and of those in a Gentile state, within as well as out of the church. In the time of the Lord's Second Advent there shall be no more Gentiles. The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters now cover the sea. They shall no more teach every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord ; for they shall all know Him from the least even unto the greatest of them. There shall be one fold and one Shepherd. Indeed the prophecy itself tells us that the Gentiles shall cease to be Gentiles, "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it" (ver. 24). Or as it is expressed by Isaiah in the very imagery of the present declaration, "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto Thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto Thee" (lx. 5). The promise, then, of an earth on which will be no more sea, is the promise of a church in which there shall be no more ignorance, no more superstition, no more idolatry, no longer an outlying region of nominal or of practical heathenism, but the tabernacle of God shall be with men universally, and the Lord shall be their God, and they shall be His people. In regard to the members of the church, the absence of a sea on the new earth is an admonition as well as a promise. In the New Church there shall be none who are in dead worship, like those of whom it is said, at the time of the judgment, that the sea gave up the dead which were in it. In this sense, too, there is no more sea.

The new heaven and the new earth are therefore nothing less than a new order or condition of religious life, that is, of spiritual vitality, among men. A generation of men new in principle and new in practice ; these are the new heaven and the new earth, and these constitute the New Church. We have had occasion to say, and have endeavoured to show that, individually applied, heaven is the inner man, or the spiritual mind, which is an image of heaven, and that the earth is the outer man, or the natural mind, which is an image of the world. When these are created anew, or born from above, this sublime announcement is realized in its most practical sense. For there is nothing in God's creation more glorious than a re-created or regenerated human soul. The re-creation of man is the final cause

and the ultimate effect of all the Lord's great and marvellous works. All His other works have relation to it. All His other works are types of it. For that which is in the end is in all the means, and in all the progression from the first cause to the ultimate effect. This is the reason that nature is full of analogies of man and of his re-creation, and that in His Word God describes them so much by their representatives in His works.

Although the Lord's church can have no actual existence among men except so far as it exists in them, we may still regard the New Church, meant by the new heaven and the new earth, in reference to the church as a general dispensation. In the most comprehensive general view, the new heaven is the New Church in heaven, and the new earth is the New Church on earth. The church in heaven, or the new Christian heaven, was formed of all the righteous who had lived during the time of the Christian dispensation, being those who were found written in the Lamb's book of life. The New Church on earth will consist of all who live according to the principles of the church as now made known to men; and in its universal form it will include the good in all churches, and in all nations, whatever their creed may be. In a less extensive sense the new heaven and the new earth mean the internal and the external of the church on earth. The internal of the church consists of its principles, and the external of the church consists of its accordant practice. Its internal is love to the Lord, its external is love to the neighbour; for love to the Lord is manifested in love to men. Such love knows nothing of sectarianism. Regarding all from love, the New Church recognizes love in others, when manifested in love to others, as the work of Christian character, and the bond of Christian brotherhood. As men will be judged not by their faith but by their works, so she judges of all. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

2. After John had seen the new heaven and the new earth, he then *saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* It is generally acknowledged that the New Jerusalem is a symbol of the church; but it is the general belief that the holy city is a figure not of the church on earth but of the church in heaven. The passing away of heaven and earth being understood to mean the end of the world, after which no other material world is to exist, it was necessary to place the New Jerusalem in heaven. But this is obviously doing violence to the prophecy, which provides a new earth as well as a new heaven; and plainly states that the holy city was seen coming down from God *out*

of the new heaven to the new earth. The Apostle Paul, it is true, speaks of the church in heaven as the “Jerusalem which is above.” But this does not affect the present question. Heaven is the church in its glorified state and in its highest perfection. In an earlier part of this prophecy the church is represented as a woman in heaven, clothed with the sun. Here it is represented as coming down out of heaven. Indeed, we have seen that the church begins in heaven; and must therefore come down from God out of heaven in order to exist on earth. St. Paul therefore speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem as being “the mother of us all.” Does not the apostle here teach that the church in heaven is the parent of the church on earth? The most obvious meaning of the language is, that the New Jerusalem means the church on earth. In the Old Testament, Jerusalem is constantly spoken of as a type of the church. What can the *New* Jerusalem mean but a *New Church*? In the spiritual sense, the church is represented both by the new earth and the new city. The earth represents the church in regard to its general principles; the city represents the church in regard to its doctrine. The church, as it came down from heaven, was itself presented under two very different appearances—as a city, and as a bride. In the Old Testament, the church is often spoken of both as a city and as a virgin. There, as here, these images express two different ideas. Doctrine and all the other externals of religion are, in themselves, considered distinctly from their indwelling affections, like Zion without inhabitants,—beautiful for situation, and adorned with towers and palaces; still, with all its grandeur, without inhabitants it would be but a splendid solitude or desolation. So is the doctrine of the church, unless it be the dwelling-place of living affections. These affections combined, are personified by the prophets as the daughter of Zion and Jerusalem, and are here personified as the bride, the Lamb’s wife. These affections constitute the life of doctrine. By these the church has conjunction with the Lord. It is in virtue of the affections of goodness and truth, and in regard to them, that the church is the bride and wife of the Lamb. The affection which eminently makes the New Church a bride and wife is the affection of love to the Lord. The grand doctrine of the New Church is the sole Divinity of Jesus Christ; and the only affection that can dwell in this doctrine, and can animate it with its own true life, is love to Him as the sole object of adoration. Love to the Lord is connected with, and manifested in, love to the neighbour. Those who have the primary love cannot be without the secondary love; so that love to

the Lord may be said to be the affection which makes the church the bride and wife of the Lord. This living affection, as distinguished from the doctrine in which it dwells, is, therefore, that which John saw as the holy city New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

If the affection of love, and especially of love to the Lord, makes the church His bride, what are the adornings by which she is prepared for her nuptials?

When, after the fall of Babylon, it was announced that the marriage of the Lamb had come, and His wife had made herself ready, it was given her to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. Here, she is said, not simply to have made herself ready, and to be arrayed, but to be adorned. In the previous instance, the church made herself ready, as we have seen, by those who then formed the church being instructed in the pure and genuine truths of the Word, which were the fine linen, clean and white, in which the Lamb's wife was afterwards arrayed. Love is the essential of marriage; but love must be founded upon a knowledge of the person and character of the object loved. This is the knowledge by which the church makes herself ready for her marriage with her Divine Husband. She must know His person as Jehovah-Jesus, the one Lord, whose name is one. She must know His character, as Love itself, and Wisdom itself. Without a knowledge of the Lord's person and character, He cannot be the object of true love. This knowledge is one of the distinguishing excellences of the New Church; therefore the Lord's bride can be arrayed in the garment of fine linen, clean and white. But besides the raiment of fine linen, which the church first puts on, as the result and outward manifestation of her initiation and instruction in holy truth and saintly righteousness, she now appears adorned as becomes a bride prepared for her husband. The adornings of the church are the graces and virtues which she acquires by cultivating the dispositions and doing the works which the truths of the Word enjoin, as necessary to form the Christian character, and secure conjunction with the Lord. In the 45th Psalm, that magnificent epithalamium, which, spiritually understood, celebrates the marriage of the Lord and His church, the bride, the king's daughter, is "all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work." The bridal garment of wrought gold and needle-work is formed of the truths of love and intelligence. Love clothes itself with these, as with a garment, always understanding them to be truths of the heart and life as well as of the mind. These truths are

the "beautiful garments" which Jerusalem is exhorted to put on (Isa. lii. 1): they are the garments of salvation with which the Lord clothes the faithful, the robe of righteousness with which He covers them, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels (Isa. lxi. 10). This symbolism is still more perfect in nature, where the earth clothes herself with verdure, and the plants and trees adorn themselves with blossoms as so many gems, and all to prepare for the nuptials, from which come the golden harvest, and the delicious fruit whose end is in itself. The prophet therefore follows up his statement respecting the garment of salvation, and the jewels with which the bride covers herself, with these words, "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth ; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (ver. 11). But this truth is still further impressed upon us in a subsequent part of the prophecy.

3. When John had seen the church as a city and as a bride, he *heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.* The tabernacle may be considered an essential part, as being indeed the sacred centre, of the holy city, and to have come down with it from God out of heaven. But the tabernacle, which is here singled out as an object of especial attention in the New Jerusalem, has already been seen as a separate object in heaven ; and it is from its having been previously seen in heaven that it is now said to be among men upon earth. In the 15th chapter, John says, "I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." The opening of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven, before the tabernacle appeared on earth, was part of that providential arrangement by which the new is always commenced before the complete consummation of the old. The opening of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was the opening of the spiritual sense of the Word, by which its interior truth was revealed. The Word is revealed interiorly, or as to the spiritual sense, before the church is fully devastated, because the New Church will then be established, into which those of the former church are invited ; and for the New Church interior Divine Truths are revealed. These interior truths, which are for the use of the New Church, must be revealed before the end of the old, since it is by means of them that the new is to have its commencement. The remains of the old must form the beginning of the new. The last of the Jews were the first

of the Christians. The truths of the Christian church were addressed to the whole Jewish people; but they were only received by those who had preserved in themselves the remains of what was good and true in the church of their fathers, on which the new and higher principles of the Christian church could be engrafted. In the highest sense, the tabernacle, like the temple, represents the Lord Himself in His Divine Humanity; with this difference, that the temple represents the Lord's Humanity as Divine Truth or Wisdom, and the tabernacle represents the Lord's Humanity as Divine Goodness or Love. The Lord is presented in connection with the New Jerusalem by the higher representative; because in the New Church the Lord will be regarded and worshipped as the Supreme Good even more than as the Supreme Truth. When seen in heaven, the temple and the tabernacle were combined. In the New Jerusalem the tabernacle was seen alone; and it alone was visible, for John saw no temple therein. The great voice that was heard out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, was the voice of Divine Love itself; which is meant by a great voice proclaiming through heaven the glad tidings that the Lord Himself will be present among men in His Divine Humanity.

But the tabernacle, while it represents the Lord's own glorious body, represents also His mystical body, the church. And here the tabernacle is to be regarded in relation to the city on the one hand, and in relation to the temple on the other. The holy city, we have seen, means the church in regard to its doctrine, and the tabernacle means the church in regard to its worship; and this is one of the reasons why the tabernacle is mentioned as well as the city. But the worship of the church was represented by the temple as well as by the tabernacle. The difference between the tabernacle and the temple, as representing the worship of the church, is similar to that which they have in relation to the Lord as the object of worship. The tabernacle represents the church in regard to its worship from love, and the temple represents the church in regard to its worship from faith. There can be no true worship, as there can be no true church, without both of these heavenly graces; but the character of the church's worship, like that of the church itself, depends upon the place which these graces occupy in relation to each other. In the spiritual church faith has the first place, and love the second; in the celestial church love occupies the first place, and faith the second. This difference arises from, and expresses, the order of progression in the Christian life; and, as a general result, the order of progression in the Christian

church. The Christian acquires the grace of faith before he acquires the grace of love. His faith, even in the first stage of his progress, is not indeed without love; but love is not his highest grace. He is striving after the state in which love will be the supreme affection of his heart. When love is his highest affection, he has reached the highest state of the Christian character and life, and has entered into its purest joys. In this state, faith is lost in love, and love is all in all. Then there is no temple there; the tabernacle of God is with him: nay, he himself is a tabernacle of the Most High; for the Lord dwells with him in love to Himself.

The progression of the Christian church has been like that of the Christian life. The first Christian church was the temple of the Lord; the second is His tabernacle. The succession of these states in the Christian church has not been similar to that of their types in the Israelitish church. The tabernacle was before the temple. Before the Incarnation, the church gradually and successively declined; since that event, the progress of the church has been upward. The first Christian church was more perfect than the Jewish; the second Christian church is more perfect than the first. The higher character of the second Christian dispensation is a matter of prophecy as well as of inference. In it are to be realized the promises, given through the prophets, of the glorious and peaceful states of the church of the latter days; when religious knowledge and righteousness shall be universal; when men and nations will see it to be their spiritual interest as well as their religious duty to love and help each other; and when they will strive not only to be rich and great, but to be wise and good. This is a lesson which even the people and nations of Christendom have yet to learn. Their mutual jealousies and conflicting interests show how far they are from having a just apprehension of the true nature of Christianity, and how little they are influenced by its benign and disinterested spirit. This state of things will disappear when the tabernacle of God is with men. One of the blessings resulting from the tabernacle of God being with men is, that He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. The presence of God is universal and most intimate; for He is the Creator and Sustainer of all. But this presence does not secure to us any but the common blessings of existence. It does not make us virtuous or happy; but it preserves us in the faculty and power of being so. That which makes us holy and happy is the Divine presence *in us*; and this is meant in the Word by the Divine presence being *with us*. God dwells with us, in the

Scripture sense, when He dwells in our hearts and minds, or in our wills and understandings. The regenerate will is, individually considered, the new tabernacle which God promises to set up and establish for ever, and in which He is to dwell perpetually with men; and when the will is new the understanding is new. "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken" (Isa. xxxiii. 20). "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27). Our Lord teaches the same doctrine in plain language: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love" (John xv. 10). "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (xiv. 23). We may say with the Psalmist, "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. . . . He that doeth these things shall never be moved" (Ps. xv.). The Lord's presence with us is unconditional: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. v. 45). His presence in us is dependent on our entering into and keeping covenant with Him. A covenant is a mutual agreement, and only continues while the conditions are observed on both sides. The Divine law contains the conditions of the covenant between God and His people. The letter of the law is the old covenant; the spirit of the law is the new. The covenant is this: "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer. xxxi. 33). This is the Christian covenant. This is the condition on which rests the promise, They shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. All conjunction with the Lord is effected by the reciprocation of His love. He loves all, and desires to be conjoined to them. If men could be saved by the Lord's loving them, all would be saved; but they are saved, not only by His loving them, but by their loving Him; that is, by their returning His love. The Lord dwells in all; but men are not saved by the Lord's dwelling in them, but by their dwelling in Him. This is a great truth. It strikes at the foundation of all false hopes founded upon the notion of immediate mercy and in-

stantaneous salvation: The Lord taught the doctrine of reciprocation in the beautiful parable of the vine and the branches: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 5). This abiding in Him makes us His people, and makes God Himself, even our Lord Jesus Christ, be with us and be our God.

4. Another blessed effect of the Lord's tabernacle being with men, and the immediate result of His dwelling with them, is now described. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.* If this were to be understood literally, it would certainly lend support to the view that the New Jerusalem means the church in heaven; for there only can this state of things be fully realized. There is, indeed, an approximation to the truth in the common idea. The promise of immunity from affliction and death has immediate reference to the state of the faithful in the world of spirits or middle state. The judgment which has there been performed has brought the former things to an end. There can be no more death, for death has been cast into the lake of fire; there can be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor toil, for the dragon that persecuted the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, has been finally consigned to his own habitation. Those whom the spirits of error and evil had thus infested in the middle state, have been raised into heaven, and are therefore freed for ever from the sorrow and suffering which their enemies inflicted. But while this prediction relates immediately to the state of the faithful in the world of spirits as the effect of the judgment, it refers to the altered state of things, resulting from the same event, in the natural world also. In the general sense, heaven and earth mean the church in heaven and the church on earth; therefore a new heaven means a New Church in heaven, and a new earth means a New Church on earth. In the New Church on earth, which comes down from the New Christian Church in heaven, which is the church in heaven meant here, there will be no more tears, nor death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall be any more pain, for the former things which produced them are passed away. We are not, however, to understand that under the New Dispensation sorrow and death in every sense shall cease. So long as men are born natural and inclined to evil, and require to be re-born and made spiritual and heavenly, there will be sorrow and crying, and

even death: for there is a sorrow that ends in joy, and a death that ends in life. Not, therefore, in the natural sense, are these signs of sin and mortality to be abolished; nor are all the trials of the Christian life to be unknown: but there shall be no more of the sorrow and death which the evils and errors of the former dispensation have produced. The cause being removed, its effects must cease.

There is, however, a sense in which this promise will receive its complete fulfilment. The dispensation itself will never die; nor will it ever show those symptoms of disease or signs of decay which all former dispensations have exhibited. As the descent of the New Jerusalem is the crowning scene of the apocalyptic vision and of the sacred volume itself, the New Church is to be the crowning dispensation of God upon earth. In it will be gradually and fully accomplished the Lord's Divine purpose, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 27).

But let us see what the language of this promise means in reference to the church on earth. Here, again, we shall find Scripture its own interpreter. Isaiah, speaking of the Lord's work at His Coming into the world, says, "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it" (xxv. 7, 8). The Lord's victory over death was His victory over him that had the power of death (Heb. ii. 14), by which He effected the great work of human Redemption. The state from which the Lord delivered mankind is described in the prophets as one of affliction, and sorrow, and pain, and even death; and the beneficent works He performed when on earth, of curing the diseased and comforting the afflicted, and even raising the dead, represented the far greater works of restoring the soul to spiritual health and life. The church which the Lord then established was to carry on the great and good work which He had begun. For a time the church went forth conquering and to conquer. But the days of single-minded faith, and disinterested love, and unwearied labour did not continue. The Revelation discloses the beginning and progress of evil and error, till the pale horse, ridden by Death and followed by Hell, trampled down all that was beautiful and goodly, which the early church had planted, and which she left as an inheritance to her children. As all this was foreseen and predicted, a remedy was provided and promised. The Lord was to come a second

time, and establish a second church. This New Dispensation was to be preceded by the first resurrection and the removal of the second death. The church was to rise again in newness of life, and there was to be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain, for the former things were passed away. But these particulars have each a meaning, in which the members of the church may find comfort and edification. The death which is to be no more is spiritual death. As spiritual death is the extinction of spiritual life, which is the life of love and faith ; the tears and sorrow and crying and pain, which are to cease, are, so to speak, parts of death ; for they are the effects of sin, of which death is the wages. They are instalments of that of which death is the full sum. When death is abolished, these cease. If death is a confirmed state of evil and falsity, these lesser ills are the beginnings, of which this state is the end. But, to be fully understood, these must be traced to their causes. That which lies at the root of sorrow is evil in the will ; and that which produces tears and crying is falsity in the understanding ; while pain, or toil, arises from both together in the life. Tears and crying, which seem to have the same meaning, are both mentioned, because, in the penitent, tears are expressive of mourning over the loss of truth, and crying is expressive of lamentation over the loss of the good which is in truth. In the regenerate life there are godly sorrow, and tearful repentance, and the labour of resisting evil. These, as we have remarked, will never be absolutely abolished in this life. But, in this case, the promise is to those who overcome. To them there shall be no more of the sorrowful experience that arises from unconquered evil and sin. For the death, and sorrow, and crying that shall be no more, are not those which the penitent suffer during the progress of the regenerate life, which have a happy issue ; but those which the impenitent suffer, when this life is ended, as the consequences of unrepented sin. A time is coming when these shall be no more.

5. When God had given the promise of wiping the tears from all eyes, and declared the end of the reign of death, and the cessation of sorrow and crying and toil, He announced the beginning of His new kingdom, in which the positive blessings of life and health and peace should be enjoyed. *And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.* A new heaven and a new earth have appeared ; the New Jerusalem has been seen coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ; the tabernacle of God has been declared to be with men ; death and sorrow are to be no more, for the former things are passed away. What, then, is meant by all things being made new ?

This Divine announcement, like that which precedes it, has immediate reference to the entirely new condition of things in the intermediate state, produced by the judgment, which raised the good into heaven and cast the evil into hell. The state of things, meant by the former things which are passed away, arose from the spirits of the just not yet made perfect, and the spirits of the unjust not yet knowing shame, being mingled together. Daniel describes the nature and effects of the change : " Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly " (xii. 10). When all, both the good and the evil, are thus brought to the simple state of their inward and essential life, and are gathered to their own, the former state of things is ended. And with the end of the old comes the beginning of the new. But the passing away of the former things, and the making of all things new, though they first take place in the spiritual world, which is the world of causes, are continued in the natural world, which is the world of effects. Causes are not, however, always seen in their effects ; and changes in the spiritual world produce corresponding changes in the natural world, only by degrees. This is expressed in the announcement itself ; for He who sat upon the throne speaks of Himself, not as having made, but as making, all things new. This accords with what John says of the descent of the New Jerusalem. He saw it coming down from God out of heaven ; to express the continual descent of the truth it represents into receptive human minds, and thus into the world, in which therefore the Lord is constantly operating, by His Spirit and His Word, to make all things new. But when even great changes take place in the natural world, it is not to be expected that their connection with the spiritual causes in which they originate will be recognized, such a connection being all but unknown. Besides, the effects of great and beneficial changes in the spiritual world may not always be of a directly spiritual character ; nor may they always appear to indicate a heavenly cause. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, in the natural world, as in the spiritual, the making of all things new must be preceded by the passing away of former things ; and old things cannot be brought to an end without something of the nature of a judgment. Our Lord speaks of His Coming being preceded by wars, and convulsions, and great tribulation. Whatever tends to make clear the distinction between the real and the seeming, the true and the false, and between good and evil, and whatever tends to separate them, and exalt the good and cast down the evil, is of the nature of a judgment ; and is seldom effected without something of conflict and tribulation. Whatever therefore

takes place in the world that has this effect is a promise of the reign of righteousness. In the second place, the spiritual states of men enter into and manifest themselves in the affairs of their moral and civil life, as well as in their religious views and conduct. And spiritual causes produce effects in that phase of life which is most active, and in which the motives and intelligence of the human mind works out its ends by congenial means. Although, therefore, the cause is spiritual, the immediate and visible effects may be natural. Indeed, it is reasonable to expect that the natural effects of spiritual causes should appear first; because, in the order of progression, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. The world, like the individual, must pass from the lower to the higher attainments and interests of life. And they must do so, that the higher may afterwards enter into and employ the lower as instruments for effecting their own more exalted uses; as life upon earth is the appointed means of ascending into the life of heaven.

We have spoken of the presence in the middle state, previous to the judgment, of multitudes of spirits, whose darkened states of mind obscured and obstructed the light of truth in its descent from God out of heaven into the human mind, as dark clouds interrupt the sun's rays in passing to the earth, and we have referred to the mental obscurity which this produced. This obstruction having been removed, light from the Sun of Righteousness can now flow into the human mind, without any hindrance but that which it meets with in the mind itself. Concurrent with this inflowing light of truth, in which there is the fire of love, there is a new revelation of the knowledge of truth. So that by the combined action of the inward influence and the outward means a new impulse and direction may be given to the mind, to aspire and strive after a truer faith, a purer love, and a holier life. It is not, however, as we have said, by the action of these on the religious sentiments alone that the Divine purpose is carried out. The light, which shines alike into the minds of the evil and the good, of natural and of spiritual men, enlightens them on whatever subject or pursuit may form their peculiar study. All intellectual light is Divine in its origin and spiritual in its nature; so that on whatever subject true light is shed, that light, however natural it may become in the mind that employs it, is spiritual; and, when rightly directed, is conducive to the uses of spiritual life, and aids in advancing the cause of religious truth and goodness. Men of science and learning, whatever motives may prompt them in their pursuits, and whatever conclusions they

may draw from the results and the subjects of their labours, are nevertheless the Egyptians, whose spoils will enrich Israel; the Gibeonites whose doom it is to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the house of God. The progress of science and the diffusion of knowledge are among the effects of the new influx of Divine light; and those who labour in producing and dispensing knowledge are the pioneers of a still higher civilization than that which many of them regard as the highest object of a laudable ambition to promote.

One of the immediate results, and one of the clearest indications, of the change which has been effected in the spiritual world, by which all things are to be made new, is, greater freedom of thought, on all subjects of interest, especially of spiritual and eternal interest, to the human race. Regarding the new light as extending its influence to the whole circle of human affairs, the advance which has been made in everything that marks human progress is so great, that it is generally acknowledged we live in a new age. This progress has, it is true, been greatest, or at least, most obvious and striking, on the material side of human life. In some departments of human knowledge and the economy of life an entire revolution has been effected; and entirely new powers have been added to the intellectual and physical nature of man. The greatest of man's achievements in these respects have been made in a way that shows forth the Divine beneficence and wisdom. The marvellous powers which the Creator has treasured up in His works have, by the intelligence which He Himself bestows, been turned into the most potent instruments of intellectual and physical service to man. Not only, however, on the physical and intellectual, but on the moral and religious side of human nature has progress been made. The abolition of slavery and serfdom shows that the conscience as well as the intelligence of Christendom has made an important advance. The cause of humanity has made undoubted progress; and civil and religious liberty has greatly increased. Ecclesiastics are perhaps, of all leaders of human opinion, the most conservative; yet there are not wanting signs of progress even among them. More enlightened views of Christian doctrine from time to time appear. There are also general as well as particular indications of advancement. The harder features of the old theology are gradually softening, and the deep lines that bespoke old age are beginning to disappear. The same influence that acts upon the minds of the clergy acts upon the minds of the laity. The clergy cannot continue to preach what the laity will not continue to hear. The dogmas of faith alone, and partial election, and irresistible grace, and

instantaneous salvation, and the joys of an outward heaven, and the miseries of an outward hell, are now more seldom presented in their severe simplicity ; but are either modified so as to bring them more into harmony with the growing intelligence of the age, or are tacitly ignored by the practical teachings of the Gospel. This indeed they always have been ; but there are now fewer laboured attempts to reconcile the two irreconcilable doctrines of the all-determining will and irresistible power of God and the accountability of man for his will and actions. Besides the signs of intellectual advancement, there are indications of a still more vital change. Religion has experienced a gradual revival, indicating the infusion of new life. Sectarianism has lost much of its exclusiveness and bitterness ; and Christians are less disposed to apply to each other the negative pole of repellent creeds, and more disposed to turn to each other the positive pole of attractive and uniting charity. The only body that refuses to yield to the new influence, commonly recognized as the spirit of the age, is the Papacy, which seems indeed to have taken a step backward, in formally claiming the infallibility which it has long assumed to possess. But this very immobility, while it saves its credit for consistency, is undermining its authority and ruining its cause. For although the Catholic hierarchy persists in standing still, Catholic countries cannot help moving on ; and thus drifting away further and further from their moorings, but only to find a safer anchorage elsewhere. The very claim which was designed more firmly to establish the authority and increase the power of the church, has lessened them, by causing dissent and producing a schism in its own body ; for, besides its own disapproving members, to this we owe the Old Catholic movement, which has thrown off allegiance to the Pope.

It may be admitted that against these, which we claim as signs and instances of progress, may be placed some things that indicate retrogression. We have heard much of rationalism, and now we hear a good deal of scientific infidelity. All newly-acquired liberty is accompanied with some licentiousness, and every onward movement is attended by some excess. But liberty and progress are not the cause of these evils, but only the occasion. The Reformation of Luther was accompanied by the licentiousness of the Anabaptists, but did not surely produce it. It is not the new movement, but the old stagnation that gives birth to these excesses, which break forth when the artificial pressure is removed, and a new stimulus is given to activity. The irrational doctrines of the church have done much to produce rationalism ; the consequent weak and unhealthy faith

of its members has had its share in causing infidelity. As the doctrines of the New Church, which are as rational as they are scriptural, extend, and obtain a firm hold upon the minds of men, naturalism in all its forms will gradually disappear. Nature and Revelation will be seen to be in perfect harmony; and therefore science and theology will never be at variance. When all natural and spiritual knowledge, and all temporal and eternal interests, are reconciled, then will be perceived the true import of the Divine announcement, "Behold I make all things new."

When all things had been declared to have been made new, John was commanded to *Write: for these words are true and faithful.* Writing is confirmation; for what is written is settled and fixed. And in regard to man, when his principles have come into action and his states of thought and affection are confirmed, they are inscribed upon the table of his heart or in the book of his life, and there remain for ever. With those who have become new creatures, "Faithful and True" are written upon their whole being. The words are the Lord's, and they are written by the hand of John; for Divine truths are written on the heart by the power of love.

6. When John had written the momentous announcement, "Behold, I make all things new," He who had uttered the words said, *It is done.* The Divine declaration, "It is done," is of the same import as the Lord's dying exclamation, "It is finished!" But the Divine voice now comes, not from the cross, but from the throne; not from the Lord's suffering, but from His glorified, Humanity. Yet the two exclamations relate to similar events. When Jesus on the cross exclaimed, "It is finished!" He declared the end of the Jewish church. When from the throne He exclaimed, "It is done!" He declared the end of the first Christian church. But the end of one dispensation is the beginning of another. When the Jewish church ended, the Christian church began. So, in like manner, the end of the first Christian church was the beginning of the second. When the church of the First Advent had passed away, the church of the Second Advent appeared. The two events are of the same nature, and are analogous. The nature of the second may therefore be seen in that of the first. Let us briefly compare them.

Although, when the Lord declared, "It is finished," there was an end of the Jewish church, there was not an end of the Jewish Scriptures. They were not abolished; but their whole aspect was changed. The law and the prophets remained; but the Jewish idea passed away, and the Christian idea came in its place. The ceremonial law was

indeed abolished in the letter, but it was established in the spirit. The law of ordinances found its highest fulfilment in the sacrifice of Christ ; and He removed it out of the way, nailing it to His cross ; and it is spiritually fulfilled in us when we offer ourselves, in worship and duty, living sacrifices to God. The moral law remained ; but instead of being only a rule, as it was among the Jews, it became a principle also, as it is, or ought to be, among Christians. A higher and purer righteousness succeeded a lower. The shadow gave way to the substance. Judaism passed away, and Christianity arose in its stead. Judaism had indeed been corrupted. But even had it remained in its integrity it would not have continued without end. It was never more than a temporary dispensation, designed to prepare the way for another and better. It was only a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.

What has been said, and is generally admitted, of the Jewish church in relation to the Christian, may to a great extent be said of the first Christian church in relation to the second. Christianity itself is indeed a finality ; but the Christian church as at first established was not the full measure of its perfection. Although from the first the Christian church stood on a distinctly higher level than the Jewish, it did not at once attain its highest possible elevation. Mankind had been spiritually descending for ages, and were in their most degraded state when Christ appeared. They could not at once grasp the whole truth, or realize the highest excellences, of His Divine religion. According to His own wise and beneficent plan, the Lord gave them His truth as they were able to hear it. And He told His disciples, and thus His church, “I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now.” But admitting that the church was to rise to higher states of intelligence and virtue, it may seem that this is to be attained, not by any higher development of Christianity itself, but only by a clearer discernment of its truth and a more perfect exhibition of its goodness. But great changes are effected, not only by imperceptible but by distinct degrees. In nature, life works out its mature results, not only by continuous but also by discrete degrees of advancement. The child becomes a man, not by mere growth of body and expansion of mind, but by the development of pre-existing powers, and an elevation of the mind into a distinctly higher degree of life and intelligence. It is in this way that a higher dispensation succeeds a lower. The second church was in the first, as the man is in the child. The second is the first in a state of greater perfection and in a higher stage of development. Old things have passed away ;

all things have become new. The first Christian Church had become corrupted, and for that reason, had there been no other, a New Church was required. But had it never fallen, it still would have come to its end, and would have been succeeded by another. Its fall was not, therefore, the essential but the accidental cause of its consummation.

When the Lord from the throne said, "It is done," He added, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.* This declaration, which we also find in the first chapter and in the last, is no doubt introduced here for the purpose of expressing the connection of the new order of things with Him who is the sum of all perfection, the Infinite Love and the Infinite Wisdom, the origin and end of the principles of the church, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He therefore continues, *I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* The Lord is the Source, His Word is the Fountain, of the Truth as a living principle, and as that which gives life. The life of truth is love. Truth in its origin is living; for in its source Divine Truth is united to Divine Love. In the human mind only can they be separated. Their separation is the cause of their destruction; that is, of their destruction in the human mind, and hence in the church. As it is by the separation of love and truth that the church is destroyed, it is by the union of love and truth that the church is restored. To the restored church the Lord again reveals Himself as the Giver of living water. But it is given to him that is athirst; for it is given to those who have a desire for truth. Every one who desires truth for its own sake, which is for the sake of the good it teaches, receives it. No others can receive the water of life. Loveless truth is not truth in its active usefulness. It is like water frozen into ice; it never fulfils its use till warmth sets it free. "He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow" (Ps. cxlvii. 18). Then the waters have free course to run and be glorified in moral growth and fruitfulness. But what is the meaning of these waters being freely given to the thirsty? God can no more withhold His gifts than the sun can withhold His influence. The gifts of God are free, as being bestowed "without money and without price" (Isa. Iv. 1). We have no claim to them; we can give no equivalent for them; nor, when we have received them, can we regard them as our own. The absence of all ideas of self-righteousness, and of the feelings they engender, are to be among the distinguishing characteristics of the subjects of the Lord's new kingdom. They will ever look upon the gifts of their King as free, dispensed to them in pure and unmerited mercy. This same truth was taught by the Lord to His disciples, when He said;

"Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8). But that truth has become perverted. It is admitted that grace comes free to men, but it is maintained that it does not come free from God. Christ has purchased it. Jesus having paid the full price, men receive the purchased gift through faith in Him. God is thus deprived of the glory of His free gift, and men are led to depend for salvation upon faith in another's righteousness.

7. The truth which comes as a free gift from its Author is to be used by those who receive it. Its first use is to overcome error and evil, as the necessary means of acquiring actual and eternal possession of goodness and truth. Therefore the free gift is followed by the declaration, *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.* We have seen what is meant by overcoming; for this duty is laid upon all the seven churches. We need only, in this place, point to the happy result—the inheritance of all things. All things good and true are inherited by him who overcomes all things evil and false. This is a law of eternal and immutable order. It may seem to some a strange and even a dangerous doctrine, that it is of more importance to desire and strive to cease from evil than it is even to strive to do good. But the reason shows its truth. So long as evil occupies the ground of the human heart, no good thing can take root and grow in it. But if evil be removed, the seed is received into good ground, and brings forth abundantly. The removal of evil is, therefore, a necessary means of receiving and doing good. Men may do outward good without overcoming inward evil, but such good is either spurious or hypocritical. It is not done for the love of good, but only for the appearance, or the reputation of goodness. It is, therefore, those who overcome that inherit all things. They will have the inward inheritance of all heavenly graces, and then the outward inheritance of heaven itself, if that can be called outward which is the habitation of purity and virtue. He who overcomes evil in himself has the Lord for his God, and is a son of God. A son of God is one who is born of God. The new birth is that complete change, by which old things are done away, and all things are become new. This individual change is that for the sake of which all others are made. It is, therefore, added to the general changes indicated by the passing away of heaven and earth, and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, and all things being made new.

8. While the promise of the inheritance of all good is given to the faithful and self-denying, the unfaithful are threatened with the

terrible consequences of their sins. *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* Opposed to those who overcome their evils of heart and life are those who indulge them; and opposed to the heavenly inheritance is the lake burning with fire and brimstone; and opposed to being born of God is the second death. These two classes and states are brought into sharp contrast to teach another lesson. The new state of things brings out the distinction between good and evil, truth and falsehood. In the decadence of the church or religion, this distinction becomes less and less clearly seen, till it is almost entirely lost. And most of all do the members of the church lose that self-knowledge, which consists essentially in distinguishing in their own hearts between good and evil, and between what is of God and what is of themselves. Before they can overcome evil, they must know it as sin; and before they can fight determinedly against it, they must be duly impressed with the terrible consequences of remaining under its yoke. All error has a tendency to obscure the understanding, blunt the conscience, and induce a state of false security; in other words, to obliterate the distinction between good and evil, life and death. All truth has a tendency to an opposite condition of things. Error produces this effect either by exalting faith above works, or by exalting formal above essential piety. Truth is precious, because it tears away the veil that false persuasions have spread over the understanding, and reveals the true state of the heart; and detects the sophistries by which evil endeavours to conceal or defend itself. Truth is the counsellor and the minister of goodness. It has no other function, and performs no other use. A passage similar to this occurs in the next chapter (verse 15), where the other particulars will be explained.

9, 10. John had already seen the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. He is now to see it from another point of view, which will enable him to perceive and describe it in all its parts. *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. It can hardly be doubted that this new view of the city, and the circumstances connected with it, have an instructive meaning. Why should the Seer have to be taken to the top of a great and high

mountain, to be shown the city he had been able to see on the plain below? Because this, with everything else that John did and experienced, represented some corresponding act and change of state which are necessary for enabling the members of the church to see spiritually what John saw in the spirit. The view which John first had of the New Jerusalem was a general one: he saw it as a whole. The view he is now called up to take is a particular one: he is to see its various parts. This is the case with all who see or understand the doctrine of the church. Their first apprehension is general, their second is particular. This more interior view can only be obtained by a more interior degree of spiritual perception being opened in the mind. This interior state is the great and high mountain to which the seer was carried; for what is high in nature is the symbol of what is interior in spirit. But the account which the seer gives of his elevation is itself instructive. An angel talked with John, and called him, saying, "Come hither." This was one of the seven angels who had the vials containing the seven last plagues. These angels came out of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony that was opened in heaven. These were angels of the highest heaven, which is the heaven of celestial love, which is love to the Lord. This heaven, with the love by which it is distinguished, is the great and high mountain to which John was called, and to which he was carried. Why should he have been called and carried thither, except to teach us that, to see the truth as it is in its highest perfection, as it is in the highest heaven, we must be raised into the highest state of love in which the angels of heaven are principled? The angels of that heaven into which John was raised are, above all others, in love to the Lord. As they are in the highest love, so are they in the purest light; for love and light are ever correspondent. The angel still invites those who have obtained the first sight of the holy city to come up higher, that they may see it in the fulness of its light and glory. And those who are willing and waiting he carries. They cannot ascend in their own strength, or by their own intelligence; they must be drawn by angelic influence, and guided by angelic wisdom, nay, by Divine influence and wisdom; for the angel was the messenger and representative of the Lord Himself. The duty of ascending the mountain, and the vantage-ground it affords for seeing the holy city, are both expressed in its being great and high; great being expressive of goodness, and high of truth. We cannot attain to a state of love but by acquiring goodness and truth. We love the Lord when we love Him as Truth and Goodness. We must,

therefore, ascend by truth and goodness into love. And when we have been carried through the means to the end, and stand upon the great and high mountain of love to the Lord, then are we able to see what John saw.

This mountain of love occupies a prominent place in the Scriptures. Moses went up to the top of Mount Sinai to receive the law of love; for such the Decalogue is, notwithstanding the tables having been broken through the sins of the people. Moses went up to the top of Pisgah and viewed the holy land, as John went up to the mountain to see the holy city. Jesus took His three disciples up with Him to the mount of transfiguration. In the opposite sense, in which a mountain means self-love, which is the perversion of love to God, the Devil took Jesus up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, promising Him the possession of them if He would fall down and worship him.

Before John was carried up to the high mountain he had seen the church as a bride; the angel is to show him the church as a bride and as a wife—the bride and wife of the Lamb. The church is a bride when she is prepared for conjunction with the Lord; she is a wife when conjunction is effected. The city was at first called holy, now it is also called great; for holy is expressive of its state in regard to truth and faith, but great is expressive of its state in regard to goodness and love. These additions to its excellences are therefore expressive of the higher states that arise from greater elevation of mind. What seems singular, the holy Jerusalem is still seen descending. For the church, or the principles of which it consists, are continually descending out of heaven from God into the hearts and minds of men. The church has, indeed, its organic forms of doctrine and worship, law and order; but these, like all organisms, are intended for the reception of the living principles of love and wisdom from the Lord, which flow into them as heat and light flow from the sun into the organized forms of nature.

There is one other distinction in the two statements which is not unworthy of notice. In the first, the holy city is said to come down from God out of heaven; in the second, it is said to come down out of heaven from God. Literally, there is no difference, except that the terms of the sentence are transposed. But in the spiritual sense there is a transposition, not of words, but of ideas. In one case God is named first, in the other He is named last, to express the idea that He is the first and the last in all things of heaven and the church, and in those who pass from faith to charity, from wisdom to love.

11. The particulars which enter into and constitute the church, the harmonious combination of which makes her a form of transcendent beauty, come now to be described. She is first spoken of as *having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.* Glory and light are so familiar as images, and so expressive as analogies, that we need do little more than point out their distinct yet similar meanings. Glory is the radiance of light. The glory and light of the city answer, as we learn from verse 23, to the light of the sun and the light of the moon. Light is the emblem of truth; the radiance of light is the emblem of love. The glory of God, so much spoken of in Scripture, is the Lord's Divine Truth radiant with Divine Love. Without heat light is destitute of glory. The cold light of the moon, beautiful as it is, has no radiance. The warm light of the sun irradiates all that it falls upon. The splendour of the rising and setting sun, the fervid brightness of its noonday rays, are faint images of the glory of God which lightens the New Jerusalem. The light of the holy city, as distinguished from its glory, is like a stone most precious, even a jasper stone, clear as crystal. We shall have occasion to speak of the jasper stone, as one of the foundations of the New Jerusalem. It is sufficient for our present purpose to regard it as a stone most precious and clear as crystal. Stones are emblematic of truth. The Lord is called, by way of eminence, the Stone, as being the Truth itself. When understood of the Word of truth, from which the church immediately derives its light and glory, stones are emblematical of its literal sense, while light means its spiritual sense, and glory its celestial sense. Among the literal truths of the Word, there are some common and some precious, and some of these more precious than others. Precious stones are those which transmit the light, or reflect it in beautiful colours; and the more perfect the transmission and reflection the more precious the stone. So with the literal truths of the Word. The more perfectly they transmit or reflect to the mental eye the light of the spiritual sense, or rather the light of the indwelling Sun of Righteousness, which shines perpetually within, the more precious they are. Yet the quality of truth, in this respect, is not entirely intrinsic, but is partly relative. The same truth in the Word is different in different minds. In some minds all truths are common, in some all are precious. None but precious stones enter into the structure of the New Jerusalem. In the New Church all the truths of the Word are translucent. The letter of the Word is no longer a covering that conceals its glory, but a medium which transmits it.

It is the stone most precious, even the jasper stone, clear as crystal. The jasper stone expresses the general character of the literal sense of the Word, as lightened by its spiritual sense. For this reason the jasper enters more than any other into the structure of the city; indeed the building of its walls is said to be of jasper (verse 18). It is to be remembered, however, that those only are inhabitants of the city, thus rich and glorious, who have its riches and its glories in themselves; in whose minds its walls are founded in humility and built up in righteousness.

12-14. The city, so magnificent, *had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.* Cities were walled for security. The church needs protection, and is therefore provided with the means of defence. This need of protection is not entirely the result of sin, nor are the means of defence the fruits of human contrivance. They are shadowed forth, not only in the works of man, but in the works of God. Throughout nature, and not least in man, the inward and vital parts are wrapped in delicate coverings and defended by strong walls. The inward and vital principles of the church, which are love and charity, are no less in need of being provided with the means of protection. The same law presides over the whole world of mind, and extends even to the throne of God, around which are the cherubim; heaven, which is God's throne, requiring for its preservation a protective, as well as a sustaining providence. If heaven needs protection, how much more the church. Zion is, therefore, described as having walls and bulwarks (Ps. xlviii. 13), and the Lord compares the kingdom of heaven to a man who planted a vineyard, and, while he digged a winepress and built a tower, hedged it round about. The Lord Himself, in His temptation, employed means of defence against His great adversary. And what were the means He employed? The Lord defended Himself against the wiles and assaults of Satan by the truths of His own written Word. These same truths form the wall which surrounds the church, and makes it a city that is compact together, and defends it against the assaults of its enemies. These enemies of the church consist not only of wicked men and evil spirits, who seek to effect her ruin by subverting her principles and corrupting the hearts of her children, they include also the evil inclinations and false suggestions which belong to the natural mind

of the members of the church themselves, and which are ever ready to rise up against and assail the heavenly principles of the spiritual mind.

The holy truths of the Word, by which the church defends herself, are the precious stones that garnish the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem, and the jasper that forms the wall itself. The truths that protect the inward and vital principles of the church are those of the literal sense of the Word. And, indeed, the literal sense of the Word forms a wall of defence around its inward spiritual sense. What may be said of the church may also be said of the Word. The church exists from the Word, and her character is according to her understanding of the Word. Love and charity, which constitute the inward and vital principles of the church, constitute the inward and living principles of the Word, and the truths of the literal sense enclose, and thus protect and preserve them. The wall of the city was great and high. In the New Church the means for the protection, defence, and preservation of her inward and vital principles are more complete and perfect than in any former dispensation. The truths which form a defence to the church are those contained in the literal sense of the Word; for these form a covering and defence to its inward spiritual truths. The wall is said to be great and high to express those two essential elements, the good and the true, which the Word everywhere, even to its lowest literal sense, contains. Great is expressive of good, and high is expressive of truth. These must also be in every mind as a defence against evil and falsity; for what is true of the church in general is also true of the church in particular. The truths of the Word are now more clearly seen than under any previous dispensation. The genuine truths of the letter of the Word are now made known. And all the truths of the letter, whether genuine or apparent, are made clear as crystal by the inward light of the spiritual sense shining through them. All these truths are now seen to have relation to love and charity, for on these two eternal immutable commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The wall had twelve gates, and at (or over) the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The gates of walled cities were for egress and ingress, and yet were strong enough to serve for defence. As the walls of the city find their analogies in nature, and especially in the human frame, so do the gates. The senses are the gateways of the soul as well as of the body; by them the soul communicates with the outer world, and the outer world with the soul. They are sentinels as well as avenues. They distinguish between friends and enemies, between

what is useful and what is hurtful, both to the body and the mind. A pleasurable sensation tells them what to admit, and an unpleasant sensation tells them what to refuse. We ascribe perception and the power of judging to the senses; but this power really belongs to the soul, which perceives and judges through the senses, and the faculties of which are within the senses, as the angels were over the gates. What the senses are to man, perceptive knowledge is to the church. Such knowledge is not religion, but there can be no religion without it. Knowledge and faith are distinct; but we cannot believe what we do not know and perceive. Knowledge is the gate. It is introductory. It enables us to discriminate and judge between what is good and evil, true and false, that we may choose the one and refuse the other. But the knowledge which enables us to judge of heavenly things is the knowledge of the truths of Scripture. Secular knowledge cultivates the mind, but human learning may oppose as well as favour religion. The knowledge which is derived from the Word is alone introductory to the church; it is the gate of the holy city. But there were twelve gates. The number twelve, which enters so largely into the form and structure of the New Jerusalem, has evident reference to the twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles. And as the patriarchs and apostles represent the whole church, and, abstractly, all the principles of the church, the twelve gates represent the complete knowledge of these principles; complete, we mean, not as exhaustive, but comprehensive and various, or suited, as we shall see, to all capacities and states of mind. Religious knowledge, as an outward acquisition, has of itself no saving power. Knowledge comes from without; faith and love come from within. "Truth springeth out of the earth; righteousness looketh down from heaven." Their union produces faith. We believe, not from knowledge, but according to it. We have spoken of the senses as having the power of perceiving and judging. But this power really belongs to the mind, which perceives and judges through the senses. So it is with that which is analogous to the senses. Knowledge is not so much a power as an instrument. It is the affection for what is true and good that prompts the mind to acquire knowledge, and to use it as the means of effecting its own ends and purposes. Affections and thoughts are the inner life and soul of knowledge. They are the angels at the gates. They are the ministers and guardians of the soul, who, by means of knowledges, distinguish between good and evil, truth and error, that they may allow or prohibit accordingly. Only, we must reflect that those of which we now speak are good affections and true thoughts, or, abstractly, goods

and truths themselves. These only are angelic and heavenly, and these only are fit to stand at the gates, and guard the way of the tree of life. But the perceptive knowledges themselves, that form the gates of admission into the church, are the knowledges of what is good and true ; and therefore the gates of the New Jerusalem had names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The qualities of good and truth are inscribed on the knowledge of them when that knowledge is more than science, when it is cognition. The twelve angels and the twelve tribes of the children of Israel are both symbolical of the principles of goodness and truth, but angels are symbolic of these principles as they are in heaven, and tribes are symbolic of these principles as they are in the church. The church in heaven and the church on earth are one, but they are one like soul and body, like the spirit and the letter. They meet together in the letter and spirit of the Word, and therefore in the gates of the New Jerusalem ; for the knowledge which introduces into the New Church is the knowledge of the Word both in the letter and the spirit.

Of the twelve gates there were *on the east, three gates; on the north, three gates, on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.* The gates giving entrance to the city on all sides proclaim, in the expressive language of symbolism, that the knowledge which opens a way into the church of God is adapted to all capacities and states of mind—to those at least who have any sincere affection for what is good and true, and any desire for salvation and eternal life. To be truly catholic or universal, the church must be capable of receiving within its walls all who have any affection for goodness and truth. And the church can only receive them within its walls by bringing the knowledge of its principles down to their apprehension ; for men are only introduced into the church by the principles of the church being introduced into them and grafted in their hearts. So far as religion is an unexplained mystery, and adhesion to it a blind faith, it is not real but only nominal religion, it is in fact only superstition. The church in this case has but one gate—the gate of unquestioning obedience to human authority, through which all alike are compelled to enter. That one gate is on the north, and all must go round to that region of shade and cold before they can be admitted. The true church is open on all sides. It is adapted to all minds, and ministers to all states. It can satisfy all the demands of the intellect, and all the desires of the heart. All these are included in the four sides of the city, with its gates on every side. The north and the

south include all intellectual states, the east and the west all moral states. All who are led by the understanding go in at the north and the south gates ; all who are led by the will go in at the east and west gates. The symbolic meaning of the four quarters to which the gates look, derives its origin from the sun, which is an image of God, and whose heat is emblematical of His love, and its light of His wisdom. East and west give us the idea of morning and evening : south and north give us the idea of midday and midnight. East and west give us only the idea of day : north and south give us, besides, the idea of night. East and west comprehend in their meaning all degrees of love, from its rise in the heart to its close in the life ; and south and north include in their meaning all degrees of wisdom, from its greatest clearness to its greatest obscurity in the understanding. One of the uses of the gates is to admit the surrounding nations into the city ; and these, we learn, are to come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south (Luke xiii. 29). Even to those who dwell in the “north country,” and “in the sides of the north,” it presents its gates, and offers free admission. Night is symbolic both of the darkness of ignorance and the darkness of error. Those who are in the darkness of ignorance are the people of the north, who enter the city of the Lord by the north gate. Those only indeed will enter on any side who, whatever their state, have an affection for goodness and truth. On the north, as on every other side, there are three gates, not only because every general state has its particular states, but because the number three is expressive of the trine, which contains in itself every thing relating to the subject or state of which it is predicted. In every general state there are three particular states, and therefore three classes of persons who form the general class. For there are some who are more in the will, some who are more in the understanding, and some who are more in the life, of religion ; and this is true of every class. The same is true of the twelve gates as of the twelve tribes who were sealed. They consisted of four classes, each consisting of three tribes. Each of these three tribes represented the three principles which unite to form one will, understanding, and life ; or what is the same, one love, faith, and obedience.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. St. Paul says to those who are of the household of God, ye “are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone ; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an

holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 20-22). This is said of the members themselves of the household of faith. But these really constitute the church. For although the body of doctrine as revealed in the Word constitutes the church intellectually considered, yet the church, as a living communion, consists of those in whom the principles of the Word have been received, and built up into a living temple or tabernacle. Whether, therefore, we regard the church as consisting of principles or of persons, it is founded upon the teaching of the apostles and prophets, and thus essentially and primarily upon the teaching of the Lord Himself. It is only the wall of the city on whose foundations are the names of the twelve apostles; but the wall is so important a part of this "building" that without it, as an enclosure and protection, the city itself could not continue to exist. The wall is to the holy city what the letter of the Word is to its spirit. The literal sense of the Word encloses and protects, and thus preserves its spiritual sense. The literal sense is that in which the spiritual sense terminates, and on which it rests. In the literal sense of the Word, Divine Truth is in its fulness, its holiness, and its power. All the doctrine of the church is to be drawn from the literal sense of the Word, and to be confirmed and defended by it. Therefore, it is in the wall of the city and at its gates that we find all the holy agencies by which the church exists and is preserved—angels, patriarchs, and apostles. Within the city are the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, which are, or rather who is, its temple and its light and glory. These constitute the very life of the church; and it is to preserve its Divine life of love and wisdom that the church has its wall of protective doctrine and its gates of introductory knowledge; that at its gates are guardian angels, and on them are the names of the patriarchal tribes; and that at its twelve foundations are the names of the twelve apostles. The twelve apostles may be considered as representing the truths and doctrines of the New Testament, and the twelve tribes as representing the truths and doctrines of the Old. Yet these are essentially the same. The difference is that the Old is introductory to the New. The law was, and still is, our school-master to bring us to Christ. The names of the tribes of Israel are therefore written on the gates through which there was entrance into the city. The apostles were the immediate instruments by whom the Lord founded and established His church, and therefore their names are in the foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem. The apostles are, however, but types of the doctrines they taught. Their teaching

was essentially that which John the Baptist commenced—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" They are still the apostles of the Lamb, as they were on earth; but they are now His apostles, not in His humility, but in His exaltation, as He is, in the glorified Humanity, in the midst of the throne, "over all, God blessed for ever."

15. The angel, who had thus far enabled John to see the New Jerusalem in its various parts, now proceeds himself to take its dimensions. *And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.* We have already seen, in explaining the eleventh chapter, where John is commanded to measure the temple, that measuring means to estimate, to ascertain the quality of a thing by applying a rule. There are some differences between these two acts of measuring that are deserving of attention. In the first instance, the angel required John to measure the temple; in this case, the angel himself measured the holy city. The temple which John measured means the church in heaven; the city which the angel measured means the church on earth: for that which John measured was the temple which he saw opened in heaven; and that which the angel measured was the city which John saw coming down out of heaven. The man measures the heavenly, the angel measures the earthly. These are like the two modes of investigating and judging, the analytic and the synthetic. And these indeed obtain in spiritual as well as in natural things. Analysis is that process by which we ascend intellectually from the natural to the spiritual; synthesis is that by which we descend from the spiritual to the natural. These processes are carried on reciprocally by men and angels, and by the external and internal man. The external estimates the quality of the internal by the measure of its own capacity for receiving internal truth; and the internal estimates the quality of the external by the measure of conformity or correspondence between the external and itself. The power and prerogative of the lower to judge of the higher the apostle recognizes where he says, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" And the apostles themselves, as angels, are spoken of as judging men. In estimating and judging of heavenly states and things, we must, if we would estimate and judge rightly, be in the good of charity, which John represented, and, like him, receive our measuring rod from heaven; for if we judge from natural good, and by the standard of natural truth, our conclusions respecting spiritual and heavenly things will be natural and therefore erroneous. Another difference between the two acts of

measuring the temple and the city is in the instruments. John measured the temple with a reed like unto a rod or staff; the angel measured with a golden reed. This is expressive of the difference, not only between the human and the angelic mode of estimating qualities, but also between the quality of the objects they were, in these instances, to estimate. The temple which John was commanded to measure represented the church in heaven; but that church consisted of those who had belonged to the church on earth, and therefore represented it. But the church which the temple in heaven represented was a spiritual church, and that which the holy city represented is a celestial church. The distinguishing quality of the first is love to the neighbour; that of the second is love to the Lord. This difference is expressed by the difference in the reeds by which the temple and the city were measured. The measures may have been the same, for each was required to be perfect in its degree; but the different qualities of the measuring reeds tell us in the language of correspondence that one was estimated by the standard of love to the neighbour, and the other by the standard of love to the Lord. This love is the golden reed with which the angel measured the holy city. And what other measure than the golden reed of celestial love can be rightly applied to a city which itself is pure gold, like unto clear glass? But the angel was about to measure, not only the city, but its gates and its wall. Not only the internal and essential principles of the church, meant by the city itself, but the truths that are introductory to, and the external truths that enclose and defend, its inward principles, are to be estimated by the same rule; for those things which are to be regarded as means, must be of the same character as those which are to be regarded as ends. If the essentials of the church and religion are love to the Lord and the neighbour, all the truths which lead to, and which protect and preserve, these principles must be of the same character.

16. The angel who had the golden reed now proceeds to measure the city. *And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.* This measure, it has often been remarked, cannot be the dimensions of any earthly city. A city about fifteen hundred miles square is not to be thought of as a city. The equality of its length, breadth, and height does not by any means give the idea of architectural symmetry. It only and obviously gives the idea of uniformity. Of geometrical figures the circle and the square give us the idea of the greatest unity

and strength. The figurative idea of the square, founded on the geometrical, is that of moral excellence, where the different elements of man's nature are so well adjusted as to form a perfect character. The religious idea differs from the moral only in being more elevated and better defined. Religion is spiritual morality, as morality is natural religion. There are two elements that enter into the formation of religious character. These are goodness and truth. Goodness belongs to the heart, truth to the mind ; or what is the same, to the will and to the understanding. Perfection of character is the result of their equality. When the heart loves what the understanding approves, the character is perfect. The will and understanding are then equal and united. The conscience is satisfied, the mind is tranquil, the life is consistent. These two elements of character are the length and the breadth of the holy city. When the sides of a figure are equal we cannot speak of length and breadth. But length, in regard to the holy city, is from east to west, and breadth is from north to south. And these, we have seen, have respect to love and wisdom, or goodness and truth. We have spoken of them in reference to the individual Christian ; but they are also elements of the church and the principles of revealed religion. All things which God has created and revealed have their origin in, and indeed consist of, goodness and truth, because all things arose from God, and are more or less in the image of Him who is Goodness itself and Truth itself. The perfection of God, as well as that of men and angels, consists in the equality and union of these two eternal principles. God alone is absolutely perfect, because He is infinitely perfect. The perfection of angels and men is nothing more than an image of His. Their perfection can be measured. His is immeasurable. The perfection, both of men and angels, has its degrees. Even in heaven there are diversities of gifts, and therefore varieties of character and function. In the Father's house are many mansions. There are not only individual but collective differences. There are higher and lower heavens. There are corresponding differences in the church. But whatever the degree of perfection men or angels may attain, there is unity of character, arising from the harmonious relation of the will, the understanding, and the life ; the length, the breadth, and the height are equal. There may be more perfect equality in these spiritual measures in some than in others ; but equality there must be : without it no one can be a true member of the church, to be which, he must be a church in its least form. This threefold equality is found also in the principles of the church. Their length and breadth and

height are equal. They are, therefore, capable of making their recipients equal, as they are themselves. And those who conform to the principles of the New Church will be found, when measured with the golden reed, to answer to the measures of the New Jerusalem. The twelve thousand furlongs are the perfect measures; twelve the perfect measure of truth, and thousands of goodness. The furlongs are expressive of progression in the life of goodness and truth; for natural spaces are analogous to spiritual states, and, as we formerly remarked (xiv. 20), when these spaces are measured by furlongs, they mean progressive advancement in states of life.

17. Besides the common measure of the length, breadth, and height of the city, there is a special measure of the wall. *And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.* The wall included all that had reference to the defence and preservation of the church, which are effected by the truths of the letter of the Word, whence all its doctrine is derived; and this measure of the wall expresses the harmony of the Divine testimony as given in the letter of the Word. The twelve twelves, which make the mystical number of a hundred and forty-four, are expressive of the same quality and equality that are implied in the length and breadth of the city; for the doctrine of good and truth is the exposition or defence of the principles themselves which constitute the church. The measure is said to be according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. The man and the angel unite in the messenger that measured the New Jerusalem. The church on earth and the church in heaven unite in the holy city. It came down from heaven. It is at once angelic and human in its nature. The golden reed of love to God is the standard of character in the church triumphant and in the church militant. The church is the Lord's kingdom on earth, and makes one by correspondence and conjunction with His kingdom in heaven. The church is a true church when the measure of the man is the measure of the angel. For, as angels were once men, and men are designed to become angels, the measure of the man and of the angel is the same.

18. We now come to a description of the composition of the wall and of the city. *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.* We need not now speak of the wall, except as regards the difference of the materials of which the wall and the city itself consist. The wall is of jasper, the city is of pure gold. The wall, which encloses and defends the city, is of jasper, because this precious stone, which forms the wall and one of its

foundations, is the symbol of Divine Truth as we possess it in the literal sense of the Word. And the literal truths of the Word form the external of the church, as they do of the Word itself; and jasper, we shall see, is emblematical of the literal sense of the Word, and of Divine Truth itself in ultimates. Gold, of which the city itself consists, is, as we have said, emblematic of love. It is very obvious from Scripture that the metals are employed as the symbols of religious graces. In Isaiah, where the glory of the church is prophetically described, the Lord says, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron" (lx. 17). Lower graces were to be exchanged for higher under the higher dispensation, of which the prophet there treats. And as these metals are figures of Christian graces, gold, the most precious of the metals, must be the symbol of the highest Christian grace. But the city was entirely of gold. A city of pure gold! how extraordinary, yet how expressive! The church which it represents is nothing but pure love, love untarnished by error, unalloyed by evil. This is descriptive of the church, as it is in itself, and as it will ever remain in its pure and heavenly doctrines. The Lord's New Church is nothing but love; its doctrines teach nothing but love. The true church is love to the Lord and the neighbour; its doctrines teach love to the Lord and the neighbour. God Himself is Love. The church, which is His mystical body, must be love; and the doctrine, whose teaching can make the members of the body images of Him whose very nature is Love, must be love also. True, God is Wisdom as well as Love. And the church must be the image of the Lord in respect to this also. But the Divine Wisdom is only the Divine Love in another form, or rather wisdom is itself the form of love, the express image of its substance. Wisdom has the same relation to love that flame has to light, or light to heat. They are distinct, indeed, but they are one. Love is the life that clothes itself with light; so that the life is the essence of the light, which is but the manifestation of itself. It is therefore said of the Lord as the eternal Word, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John i. 3). So, in its measure, is it true of the church, that her life is her light, pure love is her wisdom. So far as she has the Lord's love as her life, so far she has His wisdom as her light. While, therefore, the holy city is of pure gold, it is like unto clear, transparent glass. Strange combination of qualities, auriferous and crystalline! And yet it represents a combination of spiritual qualities that exists in the church and in the mind, which have been created anew in the image and likeness of

the perfect One. When love is in the heart, light is in the understanding. When the affection is pure, the perception is clear. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

19, 20. Having described the structure of the wall of the city and of the city itself, John now proceeds to describe the garniture of the twelve foundations of the wall. *And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.* As we are now about to consider the foundations and structure of the wall of the holy city, it may be useful to inquire into the symbolism of the precious stones which composed them. The philosophy of nature shows the ground of the imagery which, in this instance, it signifies. Precious stones owe their transparency, brilliancy, and colour to their power of refracting and reflecting light. The beauty which they exhibit is not in themselves, but in the light which they transmit. Their texture is all that can be called their own. Their various and beautiful colours are the sun's white light, which they have the power of breaking up into its innumerable prismatic rays. To the sun they are indeed indebted for their original structure, as well as for their present appearance. The luminary, whose light they transmit or reflect in rainbow hues, and with more than rainbow splendour, formed them for displaying his glories before the eyes of beholders. In speaking thus of the sun, we speak indirectly of Him who made the sun, and who acts through it as His instrument and image. It is this relation which makes nature and revelation so perfectly akin, that each is an exponent of the other. The Word of God is like His works. The truths of the Word, like the objects of creation, have been produced by that very light, which they have the power of transmitting to the human understanding. The light received and transmitted consists of two principles—causticity and lucidity—a burning quality and a shining quality. These are the origin of the red and of the white rays, of which all colours, with the intervention of black, are modifications. The causticity and lucidity of the sun's rays are emblems, as they are effects, of Love and Wisdom in the Deity; and these, presented on the dark ground of the human mind, give birth to all the varieties of human and angelic affections and ideas, as the rainbow is painted on the dark cloud. As the rain-drops that fall from the cloud in the eastern sky refract the rays

of the setting sun, and present them to the eye in the innumerable combined and harmonious hues of the rainbow ; so do the truths of the written Word, as they descend from the cloud of the latter, which has been raised into the higher affections of the natural mind, divide the inflowing light of the spiritual sun into its component parts, and present them to the mental apprehension in the varied beauty of distinct but harmonious intellectual ideas. It is the same with the Word, considered as it is in itself. Its literal sense is the cloud, the truths of which are the rain-drops, by which the inflowing light of the spiritual sun is broken into its innumerable component parts ; so that the Sun of Heaven, which, even as it shines in the spiritual sense of the Word, is too pure for us to look upon, and would blind us by excess of light, is brought down to our natural apprehension in the literal sense of the Word, in and through which the light of spiritual truth may shine with a milder lustre to us, and with more distinctive qualities. It is for this reason that precious stones, and those in particular which form the foundations of the wall of the holy city, are emblematic of the literal truths of the Word, as to their power of transmitting the light of its spiritual sense—the spiritual sense being the light of the Divine Sun, as accommodated to the apprehension of angels, which are the spirits of the just made perfect. Yet the Divine Sun consists of Love and Wisdom ; and these find their images in the heat and light of the natural sun, which are the origin of all the diversified colours that exist in nature, in particular of the red and white. The Divine Love is imaged in the sun's heat, and the Divine Wisdom in the sun's light. In nature, therefore, red is emblematic of love, and white of wisdom ; and so far as the red and white are blended, they are emblematic of love and wisdom united. It is on this reason that the symbolism of the precious stones of Scripture rests, and that their general and particular meaning is to us a matter of so much interest and importance. The twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, or the twelve precious stones of which they consist, have the same meaning as the twelve precious stones in the breastplate of Aaron, and the twelve tribes of Israel, the sealing of which is described in the seventh chapter. In both cases the twelve are divided into threes, and the signification is the same in both. The breastplate, consisting, like the foundations of the holy city, of precious stones, affords the closest resemblance to it. The twelve precious stones represent all the truths of the Word that form the foundation of the church ; and therefore they all have reference to the two universal principles of love and charity, and thus to the two kingdoms of which heaven and the

church consist. The first six stones represent truths of the celestial kingdom, where love to the Lord reigns ; and the other six represent truths of the spiritual kingdom, where charity to the neighbour reigns. In each of these kingdoms there is an internal and an external, and in each of these there is a trine. The first three stones represent the celestial love of good, and the second three the celestial love of truth ; the next three represent the spiritual love of good, and the last three the spiritual love of truth. The character of the different orders of the stones answers to these principles. The dominant colour of the first three stones is red ; in the second three it is blue from red ; in the next three the colour is blue from white ; and in the last three it is white from blue. Red corresponds to the celestial love of good, and blue from red to the celestial love of truth ; blue from white corresponds to the spiritual love of good, and white from blue to the spiritual love of truth. Celestial love is love to the Lord ; spiritual love is love to the neighbour, or charity. Such is briefly the meaning of the stones in the breastplate of Aaron, and such is the meaning of the stones in the foundation of the wall of the New Jerusalem. The twelve tribes of Israel, whose names were engraven on the stones of the breastplate, and the twelve apostles, whose names were engraven on the stones of the wall of the holy city, have a similar meaning.

In comparing the stones in the breastplate of Aaron and those that form the foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem, the arrangements are partly the inverse of each other, as if they described a descending and an ascending series. One begins where the other ends. The jasper, which is the last stone in the ephod, is the first in the wall of the holy city. Yet in each it occupies its proper place ; for the first foundation is the lowest. But although the last stone in the ephod is the first in the wall of the holy city, the last stone in the wall is not the first in the ephod. The first stone in the ephod is the fire-red sardius, and the last is the milk-white jasper, representing the entire descending series, from the highest form of love to the lowest form of truth, which we find united in Him who is the First and the Last. In the foundations of the wall, the first is the jasper, and the last is the amethyst. Nor do the two series in all other respects correspond. Indeed, there are some stones in each that are not found in the other ; and those that are common to both do not always occupy the same relative place. On this there are three things to be observed. Descending and ascending series do not always precisely answer to each other in substance or form. The first of every series

gives a character to the whole. The same thing may have a different meaning in a different relative place. Add to these, that in regard to the series of precious stones in the wall of the New Jerusalem, it is not in every case known with absolute certainty what precious stone is meant.

The labours of learned and diligent investigators give these results :—

1. Jasper: of various colours—white, purple, cornelian, green; opaque.
2. Sapphire: sky-blue; transparent.
3. Chalcedony: generally whitish or bluish; semi-transparent.
4. Emerald: grass-green; transparent.
5. Sardonyx: the red-veined onyx, exhibiting the red of the cornelian with the white of the chalcedony, intermingled in alternate layers; semi-transparent.
6. Sardius, or ruby: fire-red; transparent.
7. Chrysolite: olive-green; transparent.
8. Beryl: pale sea-green, inclining sometimes to blue; semi-transparent.
9. Topaz: wine or golden yellow; transparent.
10. Chrysoprasus: golden green; transparent.
11. Jacinth: pomegranate yellow; transparent.
12. Amethyst: deep purple or violet; transparent.

“The first foundation was jasper.” Of the stones whose precise nature is doubtful the jasper is one. A writer, speaking of the precious stones in the Revelation, and of the jasper in particular, remarks: “There is considerable difficulty in always ascertaining the precious stones of the ancients, as the original names in some instances have been transferred to others. The jasper of antiquity is of this description. The jasper of the Greeks has the same appellation in the Hebrew; but not being derived from any verb, the leading idea cannot be deduced from that source. Some colour is obviously, in the passage before us (iv. 3), intended to be the emblematic idea of the nature or character of the Deity; but jaspers are found of various colours; and it is not easy to ascertain the prevalent colour assigned by St. John. The milk-white jasper seems the most probable.” Swedenborg, in treating of the stones in the breastplate of Aaron (Ex. xxviii. 20), speaks of the jasper as white and pellucid. And this certainly answers to John’s description of it, as being clear as crystal. Its colour may be inferred from the fact, recorded in chapter iv., that He that sat upon the throne was to look upon like a jasper and a

sardine stone. The Lord is there described representatively as pure Wisdom and Love. And the milk-white jasper and the fire-red sardius answer to this idea, as precious stones of no other colours could.

What then, may we conclude, is the meaning of the jasper, which forms the first foundation of the wall of the New Jerusalem, and what apostle's name may we suppose to be written upon it? The twelve precious stones that form the twelve foundations of the wall of the holy city, representing the fundamental truths or doctrines on which the church is built, and on which it rests, what truth is that which forms the first foundation, and on which all the others in a measure rest?

The church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone” (Eph. ii. 20). “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet” (Isa. xxviii. 17, 8; 1 Peter ii. 6). The church is built upon the truths and principles which the apostles and prophets revealed and represented, and which the Lord Himself is. But among all the truths which the apostles and prophets revealed, there is one that forms the first and chief foundation of the church, and enters, besides, into its whole superstructure; as the jasper is said to form the wall of the city, as well as its first foundation. That one is the truth which is expressed in the famous confession of Peter. When the Lord inquired of His apostles, “Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. xvi. 13-18). This precious truth, that the Son of man is also the Son of God, is the first, the chief, and the immovable foundation on which the doctrinal wall of the New Jerusalem is built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This doctrine teaches not only the sole Divinity of Jesus Christ, but the Divinity of His Humanity. For Jesus was the twice-begotten Son of God. He was begotten in the womb of the virgin, and He was begotten from

the dead. His glorification, completed in His resurrection, was His second birth, the Archetype of our second birth; for the Lord's glorification answers to our regeneration. As we become sons of God by regeneration, He became the Son of God by glorification. By glorification He was born of God. All that He had derived from His human and finite mother He put off; and He arose the Son of the living God, even as to His very Humanity, now wholly Divine. Faith in this great truth, or this truth received in faith, is the chief foundation of the church in the human mind. Without this faith the truth of Jesus is not in us, either as a principle of life or a power of defence. Peter, who made this grand confession of faith in the Saviour, became thenceforward a type of faith in general and of that faith in particular. As such he was named Peter, the rock. The truth he confessed was the first foundation of the church, as he himself was the first appointed of the twelve apostles. In his mind, we may suppose, the first foundation of the Christian church was laid. To him, in his representative character, were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and to him was committed the care of the Lord's sheep. The great truth which he confessed, when established in the human mind as a truth of faith, is the jasper stone, that forms the first foundation of the wall, and of which the wall itself is built. The symbolism of the stone is further evidenced by the pervading light of the New Jerusalem being compared to a jasper stone; for truth is the light of the church, and it shines in the Christian's mind through faith. We conclude, therefore, that the jasper, being emblematic of the doctrine of the Lord, as God-Man, the Creator and Redeemer of the world, is the stone on which the name of Peter was inscribed; understanding the apostle in his representative character, as the type of the truth he confessed, and of the faith in it which he held, and which he was the first on earth fully to declare.

The next two stones after the jasper are the sapphire and the chalcedony. We must here remark that the precious stones in the wall of the New Jerusalem, like those in the breastplate of Aaron, are to be divided into four particular series, each consisting of three. If the jasper represents the doctrine of the Lord, we may conclude that the first three foundations represent the fundamental principles of faith in the Lord, as the God and Saviour of men. The sapphire, which is the middle stone of this first series here, occupies the middle place in the second series of stones in the ephod, and the group to which it there belongs signifies the celestial love of truth. But the sapphire has a large signification, as it is mentioned several times in

the Word, both historical and prophetical. When seventy of the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel, under His feet was as the work of the sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness (Exod. xxiv. 10); and the same was seen by Ezekiel (i. 26, x. 1). The sapphire there represents the literal sense of the Word, translucent from the Divine and heavenly senses which it contains, which are meant by the Lord, under whose feet it was, and the body in heaven, whose clearness it resembled. In explaining this appearance of the Divine Being, the author cites the words, "The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones; the first foundation was a jasper, the second a sapphire, the third a chalcedony ;" and remarks that truth divine in the ultimate of order, which is the Word in the letter, is principally signified by the sapphire; in illustration of which he quotes Isaiah: "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted, behold, I lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires" (liv. 11). These stones are the truths of the Word, and the foundations laid in sapphires are the truths translucent in its literal sense. As among all the precious stones the sapphire is especially representative of the truths of the literal sense of the Word, translucent from the truths of its spiritual sense; and as it was seen under the feet of the Lord, who Himself afterwards appeared as a jasper and a sardine stone, we may conclude that the sapphire, as the second of the foundations of the wall of the holy city, represents the truths of the Word that support or confirm the doctrine of the Lord, which is meant by the first foundation of jasper. The chalcedony is not mentioned in any other part of Scripture, and is never explained in the Writings. We may, however, judge of its meaning from its colour, and from its being the last of three in the particular series to which it belongs. The first stone in every particular series represents a leading principle, the second represents the truths which support and unfold it, and the third represents the use which results from it; in other words, the three represent the principle as it exists in the will, in the understanding, and in the life. These are the essence, form, and use which constitute every sacred trine. It may be difficult to connect the name of every individual apostle with a particular precious stone, as that which is said to contain his name. Nor is this of so much importance as to know the meaning of the stones themselves. In this instance, however, we may venture to say that the second and third stones in this particular series are to be identified with Philip and Andrew; these, with Peter, forming together the constituents of a trine. These three

men appear indeed to have been the first three disciples of the Lord. Andrew, when a disciple of John the Baptist, went with a fellow-disciple to see where Jesus dwelt. Returning, after a short sojourn with Jesus, "He first findeth His own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mesias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me" (John i. 41-43). Between Andrew and Philip themselves there seems to have been what we may call an outward doctrinal connection, as being of the same city, Bethsaida (verse 44), and an inward affinity of character, as we may infer from a circumstance recorded of them. When certain Greek converts expressed to Philip a desire to see Jesus, "Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus" (John xii. 22). Besides this historical connection of these disciples, there is an account of the state and direction of Philip's mind, which shows how well he was qualified to represent the truths of the Word which relate to the Lord, and testify his sole Divinity. To this apostle we owe, humanly speaking, that most complete of all our Lord's statements respecting His Personal Unity with the Father. In answer to Thomas, Jesus had said, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye have known Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me" (John xiv. 7-11). It is true that Philip's question shows a very imperfect knowledge of the Lord; but his desire to be instructed respecting what he did not know, and his yearning to obtain an intellectual sight of what he did not understand, show how well prepared he was to receive and appreciate the truth; and when he had received how fit he was to represent it.

In regard to Andrew, he, as the brother of Peter, represents the obedience of faith, which is faith as exemplified in use. This is in some measure evident from the precious stone itself, with which we connect his name. The chalcedony is of a whitish or bluish tint, and being without the warmth of red, which is the emblem of love, it

belongs to the class of gems that represent truth. And this is the character of its symbolism here; for Andrew does not represent the good of love, but the good which is the obedience of faith.

There is one circumstance connected with Andrew, in his relation to the Lord on the one hand and to Peter on the other, which is interesting and instructive. Although Peter was the first of the Lord's apostles, Andrew was the first of His disciples; and it was, as we have seen, through Andrew that Peter became a disciple of Jesus. Andrew, therefore, represents faith in the will as well as faith in act. We read in Scripture of believing with the heart, and of the opposite state of an evil heart of unbelief. Faith in the will, which Andrew represents, is that affirmative state of the heart which disposes the mind to receive, and which brings the understanding to believe, the truth, as Andrew brought his brother Simon to the Lord; and which ultimately comes, through faith, into the outward life, which is the obedience of faith. It is in this last character that Andrew is to be understood as having his name inscribed on the third foundation of the wall of the New Jerusalem.

The jasper, the sapphire, and the chalcedony represent, therefore, the doctrine of the Lord, the truth that bears witness to it, and the life in which it is exemplified.

The next three stones that enter into the foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem are the emerald, the sardonyx, and the sardius.

According to the Authorized Version, the emerald is the first stone in the second row of precious stones in the breastplate of Aaron. In this and the other three places in the Hebrew Scriptures where this word occurs (Ex. xxxix. 11; Ezek. xxvi. 17, xxviii. 13), Swedenborg translates it chrysoprasus. We therefore derive no aid from his explanation of the meaning of the stone in the ephod which the English Bible calls an emerald. The only other instance in which the emerald is named is where the singular phenomenon of a rainbow like an emerald is seen around the throne on which the Lord was seated, when He was to look upon as a jasper and a sardine stone (Rev. iv. 3). In that instance, we have seen, the emerald signifies the external sphere of the Lord's Love and Wisdom. The colour, indeed, as being that which prevails in nature, indicates this. Green, the central colour in the rainbow, was once considered to be produced by the blending of blue and yellow, which appear on either side of it in the celestial arch; which would have led us to believe that green would signify the conjunction of goodness and truth in the natural degree. But

science shows that the mingled rays of yellow and blue produce white ; which is, on a smaller scale, what all the colours mingled together resolve themselves into. We speak now of the prismatic colours. The green of art may be obtained by compounding blue and yellow ; but this is due to the pigments employed.

But although green has an external signification, yet, as the colour of the robe in which nature is arrayed, it is the sign and the emblem of life. And as the tender grass, which has more of the yellow tint, comes, and is associated in our minds with spring, the season of youth, and freshness, and hope, both to nature and human life, we may see in this grass-green coloured stone the emblem of the beginning of a series of doctrinal truths that may, both simply and combined, have in their character and results a very exalted meaning. The other two stones, the sardonyx and sardius, are emblems of the higher and the highest of all the grasses. The sardonyx is named from its being streaked with red ; and the sardius or ruby is well known to be of a glowing red colour. This series of colours may be compared to spring, summer, and autumn ; and its progressive growth and development onward to its ultimate use, may be expressed by that analogy by which our Lord describes three stages of the regenerate life—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The emerald is like spring and the blade, the sardonyx is like summer and the ear, the sardius like autumn and the full corn in the ear. In this trine, therefore, we have an emblem of the elements of love, which is life, in its beginning, progress, and final result which is use. As the first series of stones belongs to the principles and progress of faith in the Lord, this series symbolizes the principles and progress of love to the Lord. Of the last two stones of this trine, the sardonyx does not appear in the enumeration of those in the Urim and Thummim ; but the onyx, of which the sardonyx is a species, does. The onyx is the middle stone of the last three, and comes between the beryl and the jasper. The sardonyx is the red-veined onyx, as if it were a mixture of the onyx and the sardius, next to which it stands.

The three apostles whose names we connect with these three stones, as representing the qualities of which they are emblems, are Bartholomew, James, and John. Nothing is said in the Gospels respecting Bartholomew, except that his name, as one of the apostles, occurs in the first three Gospels and in the Acts. But it is generally understood that the Bartholomew of the synoptic Gospels and the Acts is the Nathaniel of the Gospel of St. John ; and respecting his character we have the testimony of an infallible witness. The same narrative

that records the acknowledgment of the Lord as the Messiah by Andrew, Peter, and Philip, informs us how Nathaniel became a disciple. As Andrew, after being himself convinced that Jesus was the Christ, found his own brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus, so Philip, after his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, found his friend Nathaniel, and prevailed on him to come and see, what he was little disposed to believe, that some good thing could come out of Nazareth. Jesus, seeing Nathaniel coming to Him, said of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" When, in reply to Nathaniel's wondering inquiry how He could know him, Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee," he exclaimed, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." Both the character which Jesus gave of Nathaniel, and Nathaniel's ready and unreserved and heartfelt acknowledgment of Jesus, show how well that apostle was qualified to represent the beginning of the grace of love to the Lord. For a spiritual Israelite is one who is principled in spiritual love; and when this love is without dissimulation, how pure it must be! The character which Peter gives of the Lord is, that He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter ii. 22). To be pronounced guileless by Him who Himself had no guile, is the highest testimony that is possible to his singleness of character. It is unnecessary to say anything regarding the personal and representative character of James and John. They are the well-known apostles and representatives of love; which was manifested in all its tenderness, devotedness, and virtue in John, the impersonation as well as the type of the good of love to the Lord.

Of the six stones which form the two particular series we have now considered, the first is the jasper and the last is the sardius; and these two stones are the last and the first of the twelve stones in the breastplate of Aaron. Here we regard them as the first and the last, or the lowest and highest of the foundation stones that relate immediately to the Lord. The jasper, as the last stone in the breastplate of Aaron, and the first foundation in the wall of the New Jerusalem, is emblematic of Divine Truth in ultimates. This is what our Lord was when He came into the world. As the Word made flesh, He was the Last, as from eternity He had been the First. The truth relating to Him, as God manifest in the flesh, is the first foundation of the church in the human mind; and love to Him is the last of the foundations that relate to the Lord as the object of Christian faith and love, and therefore of worship. As the first six foundations represent fundamental principles relating to the Lord, the last six which now follow, represent fundamental principles relating to the neighbour.

The next three stones which come now to be considered, are the chrysolite, the beryl, and the topaz. The chrysolite does not appear to have been among the stones in the ephod. The topaz is the middle stone of the first row, and the beryl is the first stone of the last row. These two stones, which are in the first and last series in the ephod, are here brought together, and form the third foundation of the wall of the holy city. According to the authorities we have quoted, the chrysolite is olive-green, the beryl is sea-green, and the topaz is wine or golden yellow. The chrysolite is not, under that name at least, among the stones of the ephod. The beryl, which our quoted authorities say is sea-green, the author of the *Arcana Cœlestia* classes with the onyx and the jasper, as stones approaching in colour to white derived from blue. The topaz, though the derivation of the name is unknown, he thinks was of a red flaming colour. This he concludes from what Job (xxviii. 19) says respecting wisdom, that “the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.” Job’s argument requires that the topaz should indeed be a precious stone, but does not require that it should be of any particular hue. The author does not assert, but conjectures, giving reasons, however, for its probable colour. He did not receive natural knowledge by inspiration; yet his inferences respecting the colours of some of the stones may be as near the truth as the conclusions or traditional knowledge of others on this subject, where the light is dim and uncertain. While he speaks of the topaz, where it occupies the highest rank in the ephod, as belonging to the celestial class, and signifying the good of celestial love, he speaks of the beryl, where it occupies the lowest rank, as belonging to the spiritual class, and signifying the spiritual love of truth. Although an object does not change its meaning when it changes its place or enters into a new combination, it changes its rank and acquires a modified signification. And this is the case with the precious stones; as it is with the apostles, whose names they bear, and with the tribes of Israel, whose names were engraven on the stones of the ephod. If we are right in regarding the last six stones as representing fundamental principles of love to the neighbour, as the first six represent the fundamental principles of love to the Lord, the precious stones we have now to consider are emblematic of these principles, or of the doctrines that unfold the secondary law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” For love to the Lord and love to the neighbour are the sum of all the Divine laws. Every precept, every truth, whether it relate to faith or love, to worship or life, has no other end than practical love to God and to man. But as, in order that we may

love God, we must know Him and believe in Him; so, that we may love our neighbour, we must know who is our neighbour, and what constitutes love to him. We must even have faith in our neighbour before we can love him; and faith in the efficacy as well as in the duty of neighbourly love, before we can truly exercise it. The first three stones of what we may regard as the second division of the twelve foundations, symbolize those fundamental truths whose varied lights show us who and what our neighbour is, what neighbourly love is, and what are the uses that result from loving him. The truths of the Word, as presented in their concentrated light in the doctrines of the New Church on the subject of love to the neighbour, are some of the most precious stones in the foundation of the wall of the New Jerusalem.

All men are included in the name of the neighbour we are to love as ourselves; and we are to love all without exception; for we are to love our enemies as well as our friends. But true doctrine obviates the serious evils which arise from undiscriminating love and indiscriminate charity. Although we are to love the evil as well as the good, we are not to love the evil as well as the good that is in them. It is not the persons of men, but the good that is in them, which makes them our neighbours. Good itself is essentially the neighbour we are to love. On this principle we can love all, and love them for the good that is in them, and for the good we can do them. It may be thought that there are some persons who have no good in them for the good to love. But all men have some remains of goodness: and that goodness, however small it be, is the quality in evil men which the good are to regard as the neighbour they are to love. As good in a person is essentially our neighbour, his person is our neighbour in a secondary sense; for we cannot love the good in a person without loving the person himself; therefore every person is to be regarded as our neighbour, but still with discrimination as to the quality, and for the sake, of the good he possesses.

If good is the neighbour we are to love, what is the love of which he is to be the object? Considered in itself, love to the neighbour, which is charity, is goodwill towards him. "Goodwill towards men" is the end, and is to be the fruit, of the gospel of peace. But goodwill, which is good in the will, must be united to truth in the understanding; for true love is love enlightened, and therefore guided and guarded, by truth. Without this guiding power, neighbourly love is simply a good impulse, that may be excited by any object that appeals to it, and which may be exerted not only without any beneficial, but even with injurious, results.

Everything that God has created, or that He bestows, has use or good for its end. He especially created human beings to be useful to each other. No creatures are so dependent upon each other's help as human beings, for all that is comprehended in the term life. Even if physical existence could be maintained, mental improvement would be impossible, without the constant action of mind upon mind. And the mind is the real man. The faculties of liberty and reason, which distinguish man from all other creatures, are potential humanity. Only by their well-directed development does their possessor become actually human. Unlike mere animals, man inherits nothing but the faculties that belong to his nature; and but for the agency of others, whose minds have been enriched by the accumulated knowledge and experience of ages, they would remain undeveloped. If human agency is necessary for fashioning the mind to the image of the world, still more requisite is it for forming it to the image of heaven. Revelation is indeed the source of religious knowledge, as God is the Giver of spiritual power. But here human agency is even more necessary than in the affairs of temporal life; for in the human mind, as it now is, there is no inherent inclination for the acquirement of spiritual things or the attainment of eternal life. The noblest office of charity is to aid in promoting this higher life. If God has created the world for the sake of heaven, and bestowed temporal for the sake of eternal life, we can only be workers together with Him by promoting His plan; and thus, like Him, making the temporal a means to the eternal. This is the highest use which charity can render to the neighbour.

The apostles whose names we connect with the precious stones of this order, and who represent the principles which the stones signify, are Thomas, Matthew, and James the son of Alpheus. These, according to Matthew, are the seventh, eighth, and ninth of the apostles, as the chrysolite, the beryl, and the topaz are of the stones in the foundations of the wall. But we are to look to their representative character for their fitness to occupy the place we have assigned them.

Thomas, the first of this trine, is better known as an apostle than either Matthew or James. We read of Thomas on the occasion of the death of Lazarus, when Jesus declared His intention to go, and invited His disciples to accompany Him, to the place where Lazarus was: "Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John xi. 16). It has been remarked that this appeal shows great devotion to the Lord, but little knowledge of His character or faith in His power. The small extent of his knowledge was still

more plainly exhibited in his bewildered answer to the Lord's statement to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you . . . and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" But an instance not only of his want of knowledge but of his want of belief, is afforded by his refusing to believe in the Lord's resurrection, when assured of it by those who had seen Him, until he should put his fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into His side. But when that evidence was offered him, how complete and sincere his faith was he showed by his exclamation : "My Lord and my God." Such was the utterance of the awakened and confirmed faith of the previously faithless Thomas. One other incident in the history of this disciple is his being with Peter, Nathaniel, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other of the disciples, engaged in the fruitless toil of fishing, when the Lord, after His resurrection, appeared to them at the sea of Tiberius, and became known to them by the multitude of fishes they obtained by following His advice, to cast the net on the right side of the ship ; teaching them and all other fishers of men to seek results by labouring, under the Lord's influence and direction, in the spirit of charity or neighbourly love, which is the right side of the ship. Besides the inference that may be drawn from the particulars of his history, his name is expressive of his representative character. Thomas and Didymus both express the fact of his being a twin. The instances of two at a birth, as in the cases of Esau and Jacob (Gen. xxv. 25, 26), Pharez and Zarah (Gen. xxxviii. 30), relate to the connection between charity and faith. These singular cases, in which the firstborn was really the younger, were Divinely ordered to teach us that although faith is born first, charity has really the birthright. Charity is the elder brother in reality ; faith only apparently. Charity, which comes after faith, is really before it—before it as a motive, though not as an act. Thomas, we may venture to conclude, was the elder brother, that he might be the representative of charity. But Thomas seems to unite in himself some of the elements both of charity and faith, of love to the Lord and of love to man ; and may be considered as a suitable representative of love to the neighbour as derived from love to the Lord ; or of love to the Lord passing into love to the neighbour. As all real faith comes from charity, all vital charity comes from love. Difference in Christian character arises from difference in the stages of the development of these graces. In those who go on unto perfection, faith yields the dominion to charity, and charity finally yields the dominion to love ; as Jacob finally yieldeth the dominion to Esau.

There is not much said of Matthew in the Gospels. Matthew is, of course, well known as an evangelist; but it is as an apostle that we are at present to regard him. It is true that what we learn of him is more in his relation to the Lord than to his fellow-disciples, yet the sacred history shows him to have had a strong feeling of charity for his fellow-sinners. When, after his call, he made a great feast for Jesus and His disciples, they were not his only guests, but "there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that sat down with them" (Luke v. 29); showing the willingness, if not the desire, of the converted publican that others like him should share in the feast of love and wisdom, into which the Lord was sure to turn the feast of gratitude and joy which His new disciple had prepared for Him. If there is anything to direct or assist us in determining the representative character of a person in the signification of his name, we have a double advantage in this respect in the case of this apostle. The name Matthew is derived from a word that signifies to give, which is sufficiently expressive of the affection of charity, which is a willingness to impart, not only temporal but spiritual good to others. But Matthew is called by another name, which is equally expressive. In Mark (ii. 14) and Luke (v. 27, 29) he is named Levi. Levi means joined; and this name was given by Leah to her third son, because she said, "Now this time will my husband be joined unto me." The import of this name was further exemplified when the tribe of Levi was divinely appointed to the priesthood. In the highest sense, Levi represented love, as the uniting medium between the Lord and the church; and in the secondary sense, he represented charity, as the common bond of union among the members of the church itself, as the tribe of Levi was among the tribes of Israel. "Charity is the bond of perfectness" (Col. iii. 14); by which not only the members of the true church, but the sincere members of every church and of all churches, are united, and form the one universal church, and by which, under the New Dispensation, all nations are to be united into one common brotherhood. This is the charity or love of the neighbour which these precious stones signify, and which the apostle with the others of the same trine represent.

With regard to the third apostle, it is still an undecided question whether James the son of Alpheus and James the brother of the Lord (Gal. i. 19) are the same person; and, if they are different, which of them was the author of the Epistle of James. The epistle is certainly highly characteristic of one whom we regard as representing the practical part, or the doctrine of the practical part, of love to the neighbour; since it is a perfect demonstration of the duty and saving

efficacy of good works, in opposition to salvation by faith alone. As we cannot positively claim for James, the son of Alpheus, the authorship of the epistle, we must assume his representative character from the place he occupies among the other apostles.

The three precious stones we have now considered, and the three apostles we have connected with them, we regard as representing the different elements of love to the neighbour, but of that love as it exists in the internal man ; the three that remain to be considered we understand to represent the corresponding elements of the same love as it exists in the external man. For the internal man is first regenerated, and the external after it and from it.

The last three precious stones that form the last three foundations of the wall of the holy city are the chrysoprasus, the jacinth, and the amethyst. The first, as its name imports, is of a golden green, the colour of the leek ; the second is hyacinth, and the third is purple. Such at least are the colours usually assigned to them. According to the Authorized Version, neither the chrysoprasus nor the jacinth was in the breastplate of Aaron ; and the amethyst, which is the last stone in the foundations of the wall of the holy city, was the ninth in the Urim and Thummim. In the *Arcana*, we have seen, the chrysoprasus is mentioned as the fourth stone, in place of the emerald. Its colour is there said to be blue derived from red ; and, as one of the second trine, it signifies the celestial love of good ; and the amethyst is there said to be blue derived from white, and to signify spiritual good, or the spiritual love of good. The author there also says, in giving this signification of the amethyst, that the spiritual love of good which it signifies, is charity towards the neighbour ; which is the meaning we understand it to have here. The jacinth is mentioned in a previous part of this book. Speaking of the great army, and of the four angels that were loosed in the great river Euphrates, John says, “ And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone.” Jacinth, we there learn, signifies, in a good sense, intelligence from spiritual love, but, in the opposite sense, intelligence from infernal love, which is self-derived intelligence. The jacinth in the wall of the holy city is intelligence from spiritual love, which is love to the neighbour. The first of the three stones is spiritual love ; the jacinth is intelligence derived from it ; and the last is the practical good or use that spiritual good produces by spiritual intelligence.

The three apostles whose names we connect with the last three stones are Thaddeus, Simon Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. Thad-

deus is the apostle who is called Judas, the brother, or, as there is some authority for believing, the son, of James. He is the "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ," who wrote the epistle addressed "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ," and concluded by ascribing "to the only wise God our Saviour, glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." In that epistle he not only exhorts his readers to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; but tells them that the evil among them are spots in their feasts of charity, and exhorts them to keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. His name, too, as a form of Judah, indicates his representative character as being that of love. Judah and his tribe are indeed representative of love to the Lord; but that which in the celestial degree is love to the Lord, in the spiritual degree becomes love to the neighbour. Of Simon nothing is recorded but the name, except that he is also called Simon Zelotes; which may mean, either that he had belonged to the sect of Zealots, or that he was distinguished for his zeal. His name, however, may be considered as expressive of the same principle as that of his fellow-apostle, Simon Peter, but occupying a less distinguished place. But it may seem inconsistent to suppose that the name of Judas Iscariot should be written on any one of the precious stones in the foundations of the wall of the Holy Jerusalem. In reading of the names of the twelve apostles being on the twelve foundations, we are to understand that their names mean the various principles which they represent. The twelve apostles represented all the principles of love and truth and goodness, or all the graces and virtues which constitute the church. Judas, as chosen by the Lord, represented one of the principles necessary to complete the church; but as the betrayer of the Lord, he represented that principle perverted. In the spiritual idea, the natural names of the apostles are not written in the foundations of the church, but their spiritual names, which are the various celestial and spiritual principles they represented; and in this representation the idea and the meaning of Judas, as a Divinely-appointed apostle, is to be separated from the idea and meaning of Judas, as the traitor. It is also to be understood that, considered simply as an apostle, Judas is, in his representative character, a very important element of the church and of religion. Of the parts that form any one thing, the first and the last are the most important; for they include and hold together all the intermediate parts, so as to make and preserve their unity. Judas, always mentioned as the last of the

apostles, represented the last of its principles, or that in which the inner or higher principles of the church find their last and therefore completest manifestation. Regeneration is completest, and the religious life is most perfect, when the very senses are so purified as to cease to allure or betray, and are the compliant and delighted instruments of a new heart and a right spirit. In the internal historical sense, Judas, as the traitor, represented the Jewish Church; the bag, of which he was the keeper, represented the Word, of which the Jews were the custodians; and the thief, which he was, represented the spiritual robbery of which the Jews were guilty, in employing the truths of the Word, as Judas employed the money in the bag, not for the use of its true owner, but for their own.

We have taken the names of the twelve apostles from the Gospels, as appointed and sent forth by the Lord; but if there be any who cannot easily distinguish a personal from a representative character, they can in their own minds substitute for the name of Judas that of the successor to his office.

From the explanation we have offered, it will be seen that the two series of precious stones, in the breastplate of Aaron and in the foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem, differ chiefly in this: In the first, the series of graces begins with the love of God; in the second, the series begins with the faith of Jesus Christ, as God in His Divine Humanity; and from faith in Him it ascends into love to Him; then, as in the first series, love to the Lord proceeds to manifest itself in love to the neighbour.

Having examined the foundations of the wall of the holy city, we now come to look at its gates.

21. *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.* Jesus is the door of the sheep; and if any enter by this door he shall be saved; and the single pearl which formed each several gate of the New Jerusalem is the knowledge of Jesus. This knowledge is the pearl of great price. It is the most precious of all truths. It is the one universal truth which comprehends all others, as Jesus Himself is the Infinite and Eternal Truth, from which all truth is derived, and to which it returns. The knowledge of Jesus, which admits and introduces into the church, is not the intellectual knowledge which informs the mind only, but the knowledge which reforms it also. Or, if we regard the gate as the knowledge which admits into the city, we must remember that it is only by our entering in at the gate that we can be introduced into the city. By walking in

the truth, not by merely knowing it, can we enter in and be saved. By entering in at the gate we are introduced into the holy city of the saved. By entering into the city through its gates, we are brought within it ; and then we are introduced into its streets, that we may walk therein. Its gates are at the entrance of its streets, as the strait gate is the entrance into the narrow way that leadeth unto life. We therefore find the streets of the New Jerusalem mentioned in connection with its gates. Its gates of pearl open into its streets of gold. Strictly speaking, the gates of the city, as distinguished from its streets, represent knowledge as distinguished from truth ; for knowledge is not truth, but is only the gateway through which we obtain entrance into it. Knowledge belongs to the memory, truth to the understanding. But even the streets of gold do not represent truths of the understanding, but truths of the heart or will. They represent truths of wisdom ; and wisdom belongs to the heart rather than to the head. Wisdom is truth united to goodness, faith united to love. We are not wise simply by knowing and understanding truth, but by loving the truth, and turning it into goodness by doing it. These truths are the streets of gold ; for streets are emblematic of truths, and gold of love and goodness. The Lord's truth opens the way to His love. Knowledge opens the way to goodness, faith to charity. Like that of the city itself, the gold of the streets is like clear glass ; for pure love is also pure light. All true love is united to truth or wisdom ; for only that is true love which is wise love.

22. The streets of the city of God lead to the temple of God ; and yet John says of the holy city, New Jerusalem, *And I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.* The temple was a figure of the Lord. We are not to understand the absence of a temple to imply the absence of worship. There is worship in the church in heaven : there must also be worship in the church on earth. There was no temple in the holy Jerusalem, and yet there was a temple : the Lord Himself was its temple. This teaches us a great and beautiful truth. All true worship terminates in the Being who is worshipped. The Lord is both the Object and the Author of worship. The very faculties which enable us to know and love Him are His gifts ; the truths which we know are His revelation ; the desires we feel are His inspiration. Nothing ascends up to heaven but that which has come down from heaven, that is, through heaven from the Father of light. True worship is not only from the Lord, but it is the Lord in us. Could we strip worship of all its outward circumstances and instrumental agencies, we should stand

face to face with the Object of our worship, and see the Lord alone in the holy temple of His Divine Humanity. We are not to imagine that we can ever see this with our outward eyes; for even the seraphim veil their faces when they fall down before Him. But this vision of John tells what every true worshipper inwardly beholds and realizes—that the Lord is the All of worship. He alone is the Temple of the New Jerusalem. Those who enter there and dwell therein know and acknowledge that neither men nor angels, neither individuals nor communities have any thing of the worship of the Lord but what they derive from Him. When the eye of their faith has pierced the veil of appearances, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb—the Eternal Divinity and the Divine Humanity, the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom, are seen to be the origin and the essence of all true worship. The three names, Lord, God, Almighty, are expressive of love, wisdom, and power, the three essentials of the Deity; while the Lamb is expressive of their manifestation in relation to mankind in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

23. As the city had no temple but the Lord, it *had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* The idea presented here is similar to that expressed in the previous verse. The New Church knows and acknowledges no light but the One true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He is the Sun of Righteousness, who arises with healing in His wings; and that Sun having risen, will no more go down, but will shine more and more unto the perfect day. The New Church is not to be without those intermediate lights that other churches have required to enlighten and direct them. The light of science, natural, moral, and spiritual, the light of reason and revelation, will shine in the New Jerusalem more brightly than in any former church or religious dispensation: but there will be this great difference—that light will not be regarded as having a separate existence or power of enlightenment; it will not be regarded as being independent of the light of revelation; but it will be seen and acknowledged to be only a derivation from the One Supreme and only true Light. For is not the book of Nature as well as the book of Revelation written by the finger of God? And is not the light of Nature from the same source as the light of Revelation? All light, all knowledge, all truth, has one source. It is men that separate the light of Nature and the light of Revelation, and set them up in opposition to each other. There is science that excommunicates religion, and there is religion that excommunicates science. But both

of these are blind leaders of the blind. The true church harmonizes and unites them, or, rather, recognizes their necessary harmony and unity.

24. When the light of nature and the light of Revelation are seen to be in harmony, religion enlightens science, and science enriches religion. *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.* The nations that are saved are those who are healed by the leaves of the tree of life (chap. xxii. 2). To be healed is to be saved. The word salvation means health. In our natural state we are diseased: when made spiritual we are restored to health. In our natural state we walk in the darkness either of ignorance or error; in a spiritual state we walk in the light of truth. The kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into the holy city, when the rulers of the intellectual world ascribe the glory and honour of their intellectual wealth and power to Him who bestows them. Viewed more abstractly, nations are the natural affections, and kings are the natural thoughts, or the natural will and understanding. The natural will and its affections are purified and saved by truth, which guides and directs them, as the light in which they walk. And when the natural understanding and its thoughts come under the influence of religion, all their acquisitions are sanctified by it, and are devoted to its service. And not only do the affections and thoughts bring their own glory and honour to exalt religion, but they acknowledge that all the glory and honour of truth is to be ascribed to Him who is its Author.

25. *The gates through which the nations and kings of the earth enter into the city shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there.* That which serves especially to introduce those who have a sincere affection for goodness and truth into the church or religion is the knowledge of God in Christ. This, we have seen, is the gate of pearl through which the nations and kings of the earth enter. In the New Jerusalem the gates are continually open. In ancient walled cities the gates were sometimes closed even during the day, but were always shut at night. In the holy city there is no night, and the gates are never shut during the day. In the New Church the gates stand wide open. The great truths respecting the Lord's Divinity, and His sole power to save, are made so plain, and are placed before the mind in a form of such beautiful simplicity, as to invite the sincere and earnest truth-seeker to enter through it into the city, where the light shines in the full glory of Divine Revelation. The gates are no longer closed by inscrutable

mysteries, unnatural decrees, or impossible conditions. The person and character and ways of God are placed so directly in the light of genuine truth, that they no longer repel, but invite the well-disposed and sincere. But the opening of the gates of the holy city results from, and therefore includes and implies, the opening of all the channels of salvation. The Word of God, which contains all the truths of the church and heaven, is now opened; and its interior light and glory are made accessible to all who desire to enter and behold them. Connected with the opening of the Word, there is an opening of the human mind to admit and perceive its light. When the mind is compared to a city, the gates are the symbols of its rational faculty, through which there is a communication with heaven within, and with the world without. The rational faculty is also intermediate between the spiritual mind and the natural, and is the medium of communication and conjunction between them. This simultaneous opening of all the avenues which lead to the Lord and heaven is but the effect of a universal progression, originating in the Divine Love, and conducted by the Divine Wisdom. The Word and the church and the human mind must advance together. They are the corresponding parts of one whole, and have a mutual action and dependence upon each other. The opening of one cannot be effected without the opening of the others. Since the Coming of the Lord, the Word, and heaven, and the church, and the human mind, which evil had closed, have been gradually and simultaneously opened. And now, under His Second Advent, all have entered on a higher stage of development, which will continue gradually and simultaneously to increase through the one unending day which has now dawned upon the world.

26. *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.* It was said before that the nations that should be saved would walk in the light of the holy city, and that the kings should bring their glory and honour into it. What was said of the kings is now said also of the nations. The nations, we have seen, represent the upright Gentiles, or those who are in simple good. The Gentiles, or nations, mentioned in the 24th verse, are those who have good natural dispositions; those now spoken of are those who do good works. Religion progresses in this way. First, the good disposition leads to the acquisition of truth, and then the purifying and enlightening influence of truth leads to the doing of good. Thus we first have nations, then kings, and after them nations again. When good in the will has passed through truth in the understanding into good in

the life, the Christian disciple brings the glory of his truth and the honour of his goodness into the church to enrich and exalt it. For the regenerate Christian lives, not for himself, but for others; and especially does he live for others when he ascribes the merit of his works to the Lord as their real Author.

27. But the Christian disciple not only delights to do good, but he strives to shun evil. He knows that *there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* Whether we speak of evil entering into the church or into the Christian mind, it amounts to the same. Whatever evil or error exists in the church has entered through the human mind. But the exclusion from the church of these opposing elements is given here as a promise. There shall in no wise enter into it either defilement, or abomination, or lying. In regard to the general church, this, no doubt, conveys a promise that the New Dispensation will never become corrupted, as all previous dispensations have. Individuals may fall into error or evil; but the general body of the church will remain sound. Error and evil are too clearly seen to admit of their ever finding a refuge within its holy precincts. In regard to its individual members, this promise does not exclude the idea of the presence of natural and hereditary infirmities. These are the common inheritance of our fallen race; and there is no reason to expect that they will ever die out of our common nature. But these involuntary evils will never, in the church, come to be permitted sins; for no form of error will ever exist under which evil can find shelter. When the light of truth shines clearly and continuously, there is no concealment for deeds of darkness. The church can preserve her doctrines pure and undefiled, her practice free from iniquity and dissimulation. But the greatest advantage of the light is, that it enables the members of the church to judge themselves, so that nothing that defileth may lurk unknown in the heart, nor anything that worketh abomination and a lie may enter into the life. None will enter but those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Love to the Lord and the neighbour are the principles of spiritual and eternal life. The Gospel, as well as the law and the prophets, hangs upon them. The Lord's work in the world had no other end than to make men love Him above all things, and each other as themselves. And as love and charity are the only principles that enter into the minds of the regenerate, those who love God and the neighbour are the only persons who are true members of the New Jerusalem on earth; and no others can enter into the church in

heaven. One great safeguard against the admission of evil and falsehood into the church of the New Age is the truth, clear and sharp as the “terrible crystal,” that the defilement of profaned goodness, and the abomination of wilful evil, and the lie of falsehood that would palliate sin, are seen to be of so deadly a nature, that no deliverance from them can be obtained by any act of Divine clemency or exercise of Divine power, except as they operate upon the mind and life, so as to effect their removal by sincere repentance, and to produce an entire change in the ends and the state of life. When the members of the church see, in the clear light of Him who is the Light of the church, showing that all that infinite love and mercy has done for them in the great work of redemption can do nothing to save them except by redeeming them from all iniquity, and creating in them a new heart and a right spirit, all self-deception is at an end ; and Divine mercy and goodness can only be hoped for in their being wrought into their affections and thoughts as an entirely new nature. And how gracious and encouraging is this inevitable truth to those who sincerely receive it ! This truth is a safeguard against the evil and falsity that corrupt the heart and pervert the understanding. Those only who have this truth written in their hearts can enter into the New Jerusalem ; for they only are written in the Lamb’s book of life. Others may enter into communion with the faithful; but none but they can be within the church, as it is in itself, and as it is in the sight of the Lord, and in consociation with the angels of heaven. But those who, by having the Lord’s love and truth in them, are really within the sacred walls of the holy city, shall be safe from the intrusion of any of the elements of corruption or deception that exist in those who are without.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. THE angel who showed John the holy Jerusalem, now turns his attention to another sight connected with it. *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.* As the holy city comes down from God out of heaven, so do the means of its support. The church on earth not only comes down from, but lives in connection with, the church in heaven : men with angels, and through angels with the Lord. In the church, as in nature, sustentation is perpetual creation. What the Word creates, the Spirit fills with life. The pouring out of the Spirit

is the crowning act of every Divine work. When God had created the heaven and the earth, the spirit moved upon the face of the waters ; when Adam was created, God breathed into his nostrils, and he became a living soul. When the dry bones were covered with flesh and became a host, the spirit came into them and they lived. So when the Lord had completed His work in the flesh, and established His church on earth, and ascended on high, He poured out His Spirit on His disciples on the day of Pentecost. And now, when the church of the Second Advent is established in the world, the spirit of truth flows down into it as a river of water of life, clear as crystal, to carry life and fruitfulness wherever it goes. These are the waters that issue out from under the threshold of the mystic temple (Ezek. xlvii. 1) ; the living waters that go out from Jerusalem (Zech. xiv. 8) ; this the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High (Ps. xlvi. 4). The Spirit of truth acts in connection with the Word of truth. The influence of the Spirit vivifies the teachings of the Word. Without the Spirit, the Word is as a body without a soul ; without the Word, the Spirit is as a soul without a body. The Spirit comes to us through the Word. The Word gives us knowledge, the Spirit gives us life and light,—the life of love, the light of wisdom. It is love that makes the waters living ; it is wisdom that gives them crystalline clearness. And thence the Divine Truth, which proceeds from the Lord's Divinity and Humanity, or from the throne of God and of the Lamb, has in its bosom both His love and wisdom. Heaven is God's throne, because it is under His government. And the Lord's love and wisdom come to the church through heaven, that they may be adapted to its state, and that His will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. There is indeed both mediate and immediate influx from the Lord into the human mind ; mediate through heaven, and immediate from His own Spirit. The Holy Spirit enters into the inmost of the mind, and acts upon the very thoughts and intents of the heart. Angelic influences act upon lower affections and thoughts, so as to dispose and prepare them for the descent of the Holy Spirit ; while human agencies act upon the more exterior thoughts and feelings. Yet all that men and angels do is but to prepare the way for the inflowing light and life from the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit is ever acting from within, while men and angels are acting from without. And in truth, all true action upon the human mind is the Lord's ; for He acts meditately through angels and men, as well as immediately by His own Spirit. Everything good and true which men and angels possess is from the

Lord ; and all its right action is from His presence in it, and is His influence acting upon it and by it. He is therefore the Author of all, and to Him belongs the merit.

2. Besides the river of the water of life flowing out from the throne, *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* The tree of life was first planted on earth by the hand of God, and was in the midst of the garden of Eden. Now it is in the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem. In the last church, as in the first, the Lord as Love, and therefore love to the Lord, is the centre and the life of all its principles. Love is life. The Lord is Life itself, because He is Love itself ; as He is Light itself, because He is Wisdom itself. Love to Him, which is His love in us, is spiritual and heavenly life. “God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John iv. 16). As love is the highest grace of religion, it ought to be the inmost in every human heart. When it is inmost, it diffuses itself through the whole mind, filling all its other graces with its own sweet life, and transforming them to its own beautiful image. It was feeding the intellect with the fruit of the tree of knowledge, instead of feeding the heart with the fruit of the tree of life, that caused the Fall and expelled man from Eden, and that closed against him the gate of Paradise, and made him a wanderer and even a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth, until the second Adam had bruised the serpent’s head, and opened again the way to the tree of life. This was effected by the Lord’s great work of redemption, which gave to every one the power to return and live. But those who had departed so far from the perfect life, could only by degrees be brought back to it again. Much has been done through the church of the First Advent to restore to man his lost estate, and still more will be done by the church of the Second Advent to give him possession of his lost inheritance. The gates are opened, never again to be shut ; the tree of life is restored, never again to be withdrawn. Yet the tree and its place are changed, answering no doubt to the changed condition of man. It is not now in a garden, but in a street ; and it now not only yields fruit for food, but produces leaves for medicine. How expressive of the changed condition and state of the human race ! Civilization has taken the place of nature, and sin of innocence. Yet civilization is not necessarily opposed to nature, as sin is to innocence. The tree of life may be planted, and may thrive, as well in the crowded street as in the solitary grove—in the most

active hives of human industry as in the greatest retirement of contemplative life. But wherever that tree is planted, it must be in the midst. Business and pleasure are not inimical to religion; but to preserve its own vitality and purity, and impart to them of its virtue, religion must occupy the centre. It must be within them as a living principle; not without them as a dead form. The church has greatly erred in giving undue importance to the form of life, to the neglect of its essential nature. She has, like Eve, by listening to the serpent, placed the tree of knowledge where the tree of life had been—in the midst of the garden. A false science of life has usurped the place of true practical wisdom. The true order, which had been lost, is now restored. The tree of life is again in the midst. Love is the central grace of religion; and all the other graces and their virtues are around it, and receive their life from it. The present form of human life, however different from that of primeval times, is not less receptive of the life of love, and of being sanctified and exalted by it. Let religion occupy the centre, give it its true place in the heart, and all around will become holy. But the religion which sanctifies and dignifies all the duties of life must be pure; the love that gives life to all the graces of religion must be wise. So the tree of life was not only in the midst of the street of the holy city, but was on either side of the river of the water of life. In the primeval paradise the river that went out of Eden was to water the garden; so in the holy city the river that proceeds out of the throne is to water the tree of life. Love is purified and nourished by truth,—outwardly by the truth of the written Word; inwardly by the Spirit of truth proceeding from Him who is at once God and the Lamb, the Eternal Divinity and the Divine Humanity. The water of this river is that of which the Lord said, “He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive” (John vii. 38).

The tree of life, watered by the river of water of life, bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Fruit is the tree’s primary use, for the sake of which it exists; and every tree is known by its fruit. Righteousness is the fruit of the tree of life. Goodness is the fruit of love. We cannot think of love separate from loving, which is the useful and beneficent activity of love. Love is the highest happiness; but it is also the highest duty. Love is the fulfilling of the law; but the law is fulfilled in a loving performance of its requirements. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 John

v. 3). “If a man love Me, he will keep My words” (John xiv. 23). “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (xiv. 21). It is this practical love that feeds the mind, and sustains its spiritual life. For the fruit of the tree of life is for meat, as its leaf is for medicine. The Lord Jesus, who was Himself the tree of life, as well as the true vine, of which His disciples are the branches, said, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work” (iv. 34). Spiritual as well as natural food is the fruit of labour. The labour of truth and of trial precedes the labour of love. This is true of the individual as of the race. Adam, shut out from the tree of life, was to eat bread in the sweat of his face, till he returned to the ground whence he was taken. And even now, when the tree of life is restored, men must make their way to it, as the life of love, through a life of self-denial. It is these progressive states of life that give the fruit of the tree of life its richness and variety. The virtues of all preceding states are combined in the last state. All the other graces of religion meet in love, because all have led and contributed to this last and highest of Christian attainments. In this respect, perhaps, the love and life of the last church will be more varied and excellent than those of the first. The tree in the first Eden is presented to us as if producing but one kind of fruit; the tree in the second is represented as bearing twelve manner of fruits. The first tree is presented to us in but one state; the second is presented to us as passing through a succession of states, as yielding her fruit every month. We are not indeed to suppose that the first church started, or that primeval man had the capacity to start, into love and its life at once: but the succession of states which led them to this highest grace must have been different from that by which their fallen posterity have to struggle upward to its attainment. They had their states of faith as well as of love,—their moon to rule by night as well as their sun to rule by day. But those states were different from ours. Faith then was but the attendant of love, reflecting its light when the shades of their evening gratefully succeeded the brighter state and active labours of their day. With us faith is something more. Some indeed invert the primeval and true order, and regard love as the attendant and reflection of faith. But even when we recognize their true relation, faith is not always with us the lamp of love, but is sometimes, and with every regenerating one for a time, a seemingly independent light. No real faith can exist without love; but in the earlier states of the religious life, faith is primary and love is secondary. Yet while faith seems to lead us up to love, love

really leads us by faith up to herself. In all real life-progress love is the active, faith the reactive power. However remote it is, and however imperceptible its influence, love is there; nor can there be either life or progress without it. The light of faith can never be more than the reflected light of love. In the progress of the regenerate life, a time comes, indeed, when the light of the moon becomes as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun becomes sevenfold, as the light of seven days: when the cold light of faith is changed into the warm light of love, and love itself is perfected in holiness. Yet it is love that secretly works out this change, that gradually increases our faith, and leads us through states of faith to acts of righteousness. What, from appearance, men call the fruits of faith, are truly fruits of love, differing in their quality according to the states of the faith through which they are produced. Love is the fruit bearer; but its fruitage is according to the states of faith. The tree of life yielded its fruit every month. These were lunar months, and the moon is the Scripture emblem of faith. A circle of the seasons and a harvest every month. How singular! But how edifying is it to be taught by it, that every state of living faith is a state of love, yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness. "Faith without works is dead."

But the tree of life produced, besides fruit, something not less necessary for us in our present state. We need to be cured as well as to be fed. And, indeed, we need to be cured that we may be fed. We cannot be nourished while a deadly disease is undermining our constitution. Love cannot be strengthened while the power of hatred is unbroken. Good cannot increase while the power of evil remains in its strength. But the persistence of evil is incompatible, not only with the progress, but with the very existence of goodness. When the tree of life is planted in the heart, it will produce its health-giving leaves as well as its life-sustaining fruit. And as the leaves come before the fruit, so will the remedial virtues of the tree be experienced before its fruit is ready for our use. For we are here speaking, not of the nominal, but of the real Christian; therefore not of the religious knowledge acquired from without, but of the spiritual truth put forth from within; not of that which is gathered into the memory, but of that which grows out of the heart. There only can the tree of life take root; thence only can its healing leaves and nourishing fruit proceed. The leaves put forth by the tree of life are therefore the truths that come forth from the will into the intellect, or from the affection into the thoughts; and these truths are not facts but perceptions; they are spiritual truths rationally apprehended. Spiritual truths are always rational, although

what are called rational truths are not always spiritual. In the New Jerusalem nothing can be recognized as true which is contrary to reason. The test of truth, however, is not so much its reasonableness as its utility. Truth is still more opposed to evil than to error. The greatest certainty we have of the truth is, that it convinces us of sin. Such is the truth imaged by the leaves of the tree of life which are for the healing of the nations. As the Lord is Himself eminently the tree of life, from whom we receive the food of spiritual life, so is He the Physician, by whom we are healed of our spiritual diseases. In a secondary sense the tree of life is His revealed Word ; the love and goodness which it teaches are its fruits that are for food ; and the truths of faith which it teaches are its leaves which are for medicine. Medicines correspond to truths, and physicians to those who administer them. The truths that are for healing, under the New Dispensation, are spiritual truths rationally explained ; but they do not heal unless they are rationally understood. By their means the reason is satisfied and the mind convinced ; and evils are removed by them when they are applied to life. All truths, however, are not for medicine. Truth has two functions, it teaches us to cease from doing evil, and it teaches us to do good. Prohibitive and corrective truths are the medicinal leaves of the tree ; teaching and guiding truths are those that perfect soul and life in goodness.

3, 4. Death, and sorrow, and disease being removed, we have the Divine promise that *there shall be no more curse*. Cursing is directly opposed to blessing. In the 14th verse it is said, "Blessed are they that do His commandments." The curse is upon them that do not keep His commandments. This is the teaching of the Word, which is found summed up in the solemn words of Moses to the sons of Israel: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse : a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God ; and a curse, if ye will not obey" (Deut. xi. 26). There is no difference between the teaching of the Old and of the New Testament on this subject ; but there is a difference in the understanding of the Old Testament church and of the New respecting the origin and nature of the curse and the blessing. The Jews understood these to be judicial, outward, and temporal. Christians, although inclined to lean to the Jewish idea, have changed temporal into eternal. The blessing and the cursing have been understood as reward and punishment. The light of the New Jerusalem gives a deeper insight into this important subject. It clearly shows that God never bestows mere outward reward, never inflicts outward punishment.

Blessing and cursing are the outward effects of inward states. Blessing is the effect of inward goodness, cursing is the effect of inward evil. We are not rewarded *for* our goodness, but *through* it; we are not punished *for* our evil, but *by* it. God is the giver of blessing, because He is the Author of goodness; He is not the Dispenser of cursing, because He is not the Author of evil. The good cannot be unrewarded, for goodness is its own reward; the evil cannot go unpunished, for evil contains its own punishment. This is not so obvious in this world, for the present is a life of probation; hereafter it will be a blessed and a dread reality, for that is a life of fruition. Still, the nature and origin of the blessing and the curse will be more distinctly seen and felt even in this world, as the origin and nature of good and evil are more clearly perceived. For there is still some lingering notion that good and evil, righteousness and sin, are not, or are not always, determined by their own nature, but by the law which commands and prohibits them. So long as this opinion prevails, men will not sufficiently inquire into or attend to the nature of good and evil, so as to see clearly their essentially and eternally opposite character. So inherent is their nature, that no decree of God could make that good which is evil, or make that evil which is good. Whatever is agreeable to His will is good; whatever is contrary to His will is evil. But this is only another way of saying that whatever is agreeable to His nature is good, and whatever is opposed to His nature is evil; for His nature and His will are one. To avoid the curse and secure the blessing, we must know the nature and the necessary results of evil and good, that we may shun the evil and do the good.

In the New Jerusalem there shall be no more curse; *but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.* The Divine throne is opposed to the curse, or cursed thing. Heaven is God's throne, and it is established upon justice and judgment. Wherever there are justice and judgment, whether in the church or in the hearts and minds of individual men, there is the habitation of His throne (Ps. lxxxix. 44). When the Lord is enthroned upon justice and judgment in the heart and mind, the reign of evil and falsehood is ended, and the reign of goodness and truth is at least begun. That is the curse; this is the blessing. When the curse of disobedience is removed, the Lord's throne is established, and His servants serve Him. *His* servants? We read of two as occupying the throne, and yet they are spoken of as one. This is another instance of the teaching of the Word—that the Lord God Almighty

and the Lamb are but one Divine Person, consisting of Divinity and Humanity, these being one Christ, as soul and body are one man. But this duality and oneness are set forth here, and require to be noticed, for a practical as well as for a doctrinal reason. It is indeed of the first importance that men should have a just view of the object of their worship, and be able to think, not only without confusion and distraction, but with distinctness and satisfaction of the Trinity in unity. This great truth should shine as a lamp in the mind of every member of the church. But the dogmatic truth contains another, which is yet the same under another aspect, or different mode of apprehension. What, under one aspect, are Divinity and Humanity, under another aspect are Love and Wisdom; as, under one aspect, man consists of soul and body, while, under another, he consists of will and understanding. In the Lord, Love and Wisdom are distinct, and yet are one. This is the reason that two are mentioned as occupying the throne, and yet these two are spoken of as one. As Love and Wisdom are one in the Lord, so should they be one in us. We have no true love but what we derive from the love of God; we have no true wisdom but what we derive from the wisdom of God. And we are only images of God when our love and wisdom, charity and faith, are united in good works. It is then only that we are His servants, and see His face, and have His name written on our foreheads. We serve Him when we do His commandments; we see His face when we perceive His wisdom in our understanding; and we have His name written in our foreheads when we feel the power of His love in our heart, when we will, and think, and do what is agreeable to His will.

5. Where the servants of the Lord see His face, which, on the mount, shone as the sun (Matt. xvii. 2), *there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.* Similar statements occur in the previous chapter, but in another order, form, and connection. We may suppose they would not so soon have been repeated but for a sufficient reason, one, therefore, from which we may derive instruction. The previous chapter relates to those who have not yet entered, or are only entering into the holy city—the nations and kings who are to bring their glory and honour into it; the present chapter relates to those who are actually in it—the servants of the Lord, who serve Him. Those who are only entering into the church, and those who have entered, see things differently. In the progress of the regenerate life, the relative importance,

and therefore the relative order, of spiritual things and states are so changed, that what was first becomes last, and what was last, first. This is markedly expressed in the previous and in the present relation. There, "no night" follows the perpetual shining of the Divine light ; here, it precedes it. There it is mentioned in connection with the gates of the city ; here it is mentioned in connection with the city itself. Thus as seen by proselytes of the gate and by the inhabitants of the city. The images and expressions, too, are varied. Instead of the city having no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, the Lord's servants need no candle, neither light of the sun ; where both the image and the order are changed. Instead of the glory of God lighting the city, the Lamb is the Lamp thereof, and the Lord God giveth them light. In the New Jerusalem there is thus neither the natural light of the moon nor the artificial light of the lamp. In the New Church men will derive their faith neither from the light of nature nor from the light of their own intelligence, but from the light which the Lord is, and which He gives them in His Word and by His Spirit. The light of nature will not enable them to enter into its gates ; the light of their own intelligence will not avail them within its walls. As all lesser lights fade from the sight, or are shorn of their lustre, when the sun has risen, so all that is of nature or of man is lost in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. It is only when the Lord is acknowledged as the Fountain and Giver of light, and when the throne of His dominion is set up in the hearts of His servants, that *they shall reign for ever and ever*. It is promised to those who overcome that they shall sit down with Jesus in His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne ; and those who had been redeemed praise the Redeemer for having made them unto God kings and priests. But what is this eternal reign of the saints ? Is it their reign as members of the church triumphant in heaven ? The light of the New Jerusalem gives us a deeper insight into this subject. They who reign in heaven are those in whom heaven reigns. They who overcome sit down with Jesus in His throne. As their conquest is over themselves, so is their reign. Their mind is their kingdom ; their thoughts and affections, passions and appetites, are their subjects ; and when they rule these in righteousness, they reign ; and if they continue steadfast in the love of God and the neighbour, they reign for ever and ever.

6-9. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly:

blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. Most of the particulars that occur in these verses appear in previous parts of the book, though with the qualification remarked respecting the words we have just now considered. We may again state that these repetitions are not superfluities. Nor can they be intended merely to refresh the memory, or impress the same truth more deeply on the mind. Three times, within a brief space, we are assured that "these sayings are faithful and true." Four times in this chapter we find the declaration, first made in the third, that the Lord is to come quickly. And twice, at no great interval, John falls down to worship the angel who showed him these wonderful sights. Regarded as the inspiration of God, and not as a work of human skill, the Word contains no vain, no useless, repetitions. Where repetitions occur, they are the enunciation of the same truth under different circumstances, and in reference to different states of men. For although the Word is Divine, its truths, like the sun's rays, are bent and modified by the mediums through which they pass. Thus, the first statement in these verses comes to us in three different forms: "These are the true sayings of God" (xix. 9); "These words are true and faithful" (xxi. 5); "These sayings are faithful and true" (xxii. 6). We may see in this the signs of an advancing state. The sayings of God are first seen to be true, then true and faithful, and lastly, faithful and true. The inversion of the terms in the last two instances expresses an inversion of state. Truth leads to good, and then good acts by truth.

After affirming the truth and faithfulness of his sayings, John's guide and instructor adds: "And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things that must shortly be done." The things to be done include the events of the whole apocalyptic prophecy; and these, under a comprehensive view, are three—laying open the state of the church, bringing it to an end by a general judgment, and instituting a new church in its stead. Inseparably connected with these is the Coming of the Lord. He comes by visitation, by judgment, and by restoration. In the prophecies of the Old Testament these are found in constant succession and connection, as they are in the prophecies of the New, and most fully in this prophecy of St. John. Therefore the Lord God of the holy prophets

sent His angel to show John these things. The states through which the Christian Church has passed are essentially the same as those which mark the successive stages of all former dispensations. This is assuming that the Christian Church has, like all preceding churches, declined and come to its end. All will allow that it has not preserved its primitive purity and simplicity; but few will confess that it has been seriously corrupted, except as a charge by the different sections of the church against each other. All indeed admit that in the last days antichrist, and scoffers walking after their own lusts, will appear. But the end which these corruptions of doctrine and life portend is supposed to be the end of the world. Translate this into its corresponding spiritual or religious meaning, and the end of the world becomes the end of the church. Reason and science, as they always will, when the one is sound and the other is true, confirm the real sense of Scripture. Compare this prophet of the New Testament with the prophets of the Old, and give his language the same spiritual interpretation, and its natural images will be changed into spiritual truths, which will raise our views of the meaning of his words as far above the prevailing conception of them, as the views of the Lord's disciples on the subjects of prophecy were above those of the Jews. The need for a spiritual interpretation is pressed upon us in the simple assurance, "Behold, I come quickly." The church has waited in expectancy for nearly two thousand years; and yet to most there is no sign of the Lord's Coming. True, Peter, speaking of the mockers who say, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," reminds us that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," and that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Yet the repeated assurance that He will come quickly, might suggest to us that He who is above time, and to whom its longest and shortest periods are the same, intended to convey in that temporal expression an idea not limited by time. Strictly speaking, time is a material idea. It does not exist in the spiritual world or in spiritual things. In heaven and in the church there is state, as in the world there is time. In the natural world the progress of state has some coincidence with the progress of time; for here states are formed and advance in time. But although they enter into time, time does not enter into them. They are within it, yet above it, like the mind in relation to the body. If time is the analogue of

state, what is analogous to a short time, or to an event coming quickly ? Quickness in relation to time is, we have seen, certainty in relation to state. The Lord's promise to come quickly is the promise that He will certainly come. But this assurance of the certainty of His Coming, is the promise of the glory and blessedness of the state which His Coming was to introduce. Therefore this promise is followed by the declaration, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." It is they who receive the Lord at His Coming. These are the faithful and wise stewards that feed the Lord's household while they watch for His Coming; the good and faithful servants that in their Lord's absence employ His talents; the wise virgins who take their lamps, not forgetting their oil, and go forth to meet the bridegroom. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Yet what are the prophecies of the book that are to be kept, and what is the keeping of them ? Predictions are seldom understood till they are fulfilled, and can hardly therefore be acted upon, or the events prepared for, by anticipation. And even if we regard prophesying in the New Testament sense of teaching, there is little in the book of Revelation that is directly practical in its tendency. But if we accept in its full significance and importance the declaration of this book itself, that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (xvii. 4), we can see that the spirit, if not the letter, of the sayings of this prophecy may be kept, and indeed must be kept, as the condition of securing the blessing of being a citizen of the New Jerusalem. The testimony of Jesus is not only the evidence which all prophecy bears to Jesus, as the Lord and Saviour of men, but it is also the inward testimony which Jesus gives of Himself to every true believer, the witness of a new heart and a right spirit, which is salvation and eternal life. As it is Jesus who, by the creation of a new will and understanding, makes us new creatures, it is He who gives us this inward testimony, and enables us to keep the sayings of this crowning book of Revelation, whose main design is to introduce the crowning dispensation of His love, the New Jerusalem. The sayings of the book, which introduces the New Church, are the doctrines and principles of that church. These principles, as we have seen, in our exposition of the book itself, are love to the Lord and love to man, as distinguished from dead works and a dead faith. The sayings, not only of this book, but of the whole Book of God, when inwardly viewed, are nothing but love and charity. Therefore the angel himself, who, from these things, showed he was a being so glorious that John fell down at his feet to worship him, declared

himself to be of them that keep the sayings of this book. Love and charity are the principles of heaven as well as of the church. He had been a prophet. Supposing him to have been Isaiah or Daniel, who had prophesied of the Lord's First Coming and kingdom, as John prophesied of His Second, he was now able to see his own prophecy in a new and more resplendent light. What he had uttered in the dark sayings of prophetic language, he now saw in the light of angelic wisdom. And even the things which the angel showed unto John, and which John saw and heard in vision, were open to the angel, and were seen so far as angelic sight could reach. He was already in the heavenly Jerusalem, the pattern of the earthly, and knew its substance and its form after a celestial manner.

But although his wisdom and perception were angelic, they were far from being Divine. For although the wisdom of angels is so ineffable to men that it would seem to them to be Divine, and they would fall down and worship before it, as John did to the angel, yet angels themselves see their infinite distance from God, and know still more perfectly than men that they are as nothing before Him. They know that there is no proportion between the finite and the infinite ; and that the highest angelic wisdom is nothing more than a finite apprehension of infinite wisdom, as they themselves are finite images of the Infinite. Angels have, no doubt, a clearer perception of their infinite distance from the All-wise and All-good, and therefore a deeper sense of their own imperfection. They see and feel, too, more truly than men, not only that all their wisdom and goodness is from God, and that they are dependent upon Him for every gift and every enjoyment. No wonder, then, that when John fell down to worship the celestial being more dazzlingly beautiful than the sights that had filled the seer's soul with wonder and admiration, the angel should shrink with holy fear from the offered Divine honour, and exclaim, " See thou do it not." For however superior angels may be in comparison with men, in this they are alike : angels and men are fellow-servants ; they are brethren ; they are both subject to the same laws of life. They have one Divine Master, one heavenly Father, whose will they are both alike required to obey. That Master and Father is the Lord Jesus Christ, the God whom the angel directed John to worship, He whom all the angels worship.

10. The angel having showed John the blessedness of keeping the sayings of the prophecy, now said unto him, *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand.* When Daniel had seen a vision, which received its fulfilment at the time of the Lord's

First Advent, it was said unto him, "Shut up the vision; for it shall be for many days" (viii. 26). Yet these many days were not nearly so long as the time which is here said to be at hand, a proof that time is but a name for state. But why was Daniel's vision to be shut, and John's to remain open? The circumstances and states connected with the two visions were extremely different. The Jewish church gradually declined into the gross darkness of the letter which killeth, so that the Word became to them altogether a sealed book. The Christian church, though fallen from its primitive purity, and from the true understanding of the Word, has never closed it to the same extent or in the same way as the Jewish. The Jewish church closed the Word, especially the prophetic Word, entirely, and perhaps for ever, against itself, by denying and rejecting the Messiah. The Christian church has so far closed the Word, as to refuse its testimony to the sole Divinity of the Lord and the Divinity of His Humanity; but has left it so far open as to acknowledge Him to be a Divine Person, though not the only Divine Being. The command of the angel seems, however, only to relate to the book of Revelation. Directly, it does; indirectly, it relates to the whole Word; for the testimony of Scripture is one. In regard to the Revelation, the command to John does not seem very intelligible. In what sense could John shut it or keep it open? His function seems to have been to reveal, not to interpret. As he left the prophecy it may be said to have been neither shut nor open; not sealed, yet not unsealed. Its being left unsealed is a promise as well as a command—a promise that the time was at hand, that the state of the church to which the prophecy referred would certainly come, and that when that state was consummated the opening of the book would take place. Indeed, the opening takes place before the final consummation, even when the time is at hand, but not yet fully come. And this is the time to which the Apocalypse chiefly relates. This prophecy, as formerly remarked, is not historical, but spiritual. It treats not of times, but of states; and it describes the states of the church, not as they arose, but as they were laid open and disclosed, when they had reached that stage which made them ripe for the day of decision. In considering the language of the prophecy, and even the words of the angel, we should not carry our thoughts back to the time when the Revelation was given, but forward to the time to which it relates, so far as state has its manifestation in time. The very expressions, "I come quickly," "The time is at hand," may thus be understood as pronounced on the eve of the event itself to which they relate.

11. The time which the angel declared to be at hand is the time of the Lord's Coming, and of the Last Judgment. Judgment takes place when the church has so far declined as to be no longer able to meet the spiritual requirements of the human race. Churches, like individuals, may be carried off by disease, or pass away by the natural process of decay, or come to their end by the combined agency of both. To churches, as to individuals, it is appointed—after death the judgment. But to them also is the promise of a resurrection from the dead. The New Dispensation promised in the Revelation is the previous Dispensation risen into new and higher life, more spiritual, more youthful, and more vigorous. This is the resurrection unto life. But there is also a resurrection unto death. And as there is a resurrection, so is there a judgment, unto life and unto death. At the time of the end, all who have lived under the dispensation are judged; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. xii. 2). The state of all is then fixed for ever. Then is realized the truth, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.* Solemn is the thought that the state of the soul, whatever it has been made in this world, in the other world remains unchanged to all eternity. It is not fixed by a Divine decree. Divine judgment is not a formal sentence of acquittal or guilt, and of reward or punishment, as in human judicature. It is the removal, on the one hand, of the last covering, and, on the other, the stripping off of the last disguise, so that the soul stands forth in its unjustness and filthiness, or in its righteousness and holiness; and is borne down into hell by the irresistible tendency of its evil and falsity, or carried up into heaven by the irrepressible buoyancy of its goodness and truth. "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 10, 3). The discrimination and separation of the good and the evil, the true and the false, in the other world, have the effect of discriminating and separating good and evil, truth and falsity, in the natural world; so that injustice and impurity, righteousness and holiness, are seen in their true character. Unchangeable in their nature, and opposite in their character, as heaven and hell, yet good and evil, truth and falsity, are imperfectly differenced, and are even in some instances confounded, when error and evil prevail. Judgment removes the causes of this judicial

blindness. When the Divine judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (xxvi. 9). For judgment the Lord came into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind (John ix. 39). The ultimate purpose of all Divine judgment is to purify the moral atmosphere and clear the mental sight, that the eternal distinction between good and evil may be made more plain and unmistakable. This is included in the decision, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still."

12. The certainty of judgment is one of the greatest deterrents from evil and incentives to goodness. *And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* Quickly is certainly. "Thinkest thou, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. ii. 3, 6). The present assurance is, however, rather a promise than a threat; and is calculated to inspire hope rather than to excite fear. "My reward is with Me." In the sublimely expressed promise of the Lord's First Coming, this is announced under the encouraging address, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. . . . Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isa. xl. 1, 10, 11). In the sixty-second chapter, the church is addressed in the same comforting language. "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." To "give every man according as his work shall be," is no doubt a form of expressing judgment on the evil and the good. But the preceding words, "My reward is with Me," show that in the present case it is intended only as a promise to the righteous, as it evidently is in the other instances in which it is used. But what comfort and encouragement is it for the righteous that when the Lord comes to them by death or judgment, His reward is with Him, to give every man according as his work shall be? We are so accustomed to think of reward as an outward recompense, that we may have some difficulty in realizing its true nature, or appreciating its true value. We cannot be too deeply impressed with the conviction that the Christian's reward is an inward possession, and that the Lord bestows the highest possible reward

when He gives Himself. The Lord said to Abraham, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. xv. 1). This may be understood to mean that He was his great Rewarder; but it expresses the plainest and severest truth. The Lord is Himself the reward as well as the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, especially in the way of holiness. There are outward means and signs of happiness in heaven as well as upon earth; but there happiness comes still more and more perceptibly than on earth, through inward holiness. If even we think of spiritual and eternal reward as happiness bestowed upon us, yet we may be convinced that the Lord can only make us happy by bestowing upon us a measure of His own happiness. And as His happiness is the result of His goodness, He can only bestow His happiness in and through His goodness. Therefore He gives to every man according to his work. Work, in the Scripture sense, is practical goodness; goodness of the heart coming into goodness in the life. This goodness is from the Lord; so is its reward. Work thus viewed is the capacity of reward—the measure of happiness. The Christian is therefore rewarded, not for his work, but according to it. The Lord's reward is with Him; and those who receive Him receive His reward.

13. To those who receive the Lord into the heart as goodness, and manifest that goodness in the life, the Lord is *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*. In His own person, Jesus is the First as the Eternal Divinity, and the Last as the Divine Humanity,—as the Creator and the Redeemer. But in heaven, in the church, and in the human mind, He is the first and the last as the Author and Finisher of their faith. Every good work is begun and ended in Him. He inspires the motive, enlightens the judgment, and directs the life. He is the Alpha and the Omega, as the origin and end of love in the heart: He is the beginning and the end as the origin and end of wisdom in the mind: and He is the first and the last as the origin and end of good in the life. Love, wisdom, and use, or charity, faith, and works, are the three elements which constitute religion, and which therefore constitute the church and heaven.

14. While these three elements constitute religion, peculiar importance is attached to works. *Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* This is the teaching of the Gospel. To the question, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" the Lord answered, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix. 16, 17). Consistently with this, it is

constantly declared that men will be judged according to their works. The keeping of the commandments gives a right to the tree of life ; because all religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good. Every created thing, as well as men, exists for the sake of some use, and the character and nature of everything are determined by it : in its use the whole nature and quality of a thing is embodied. The nature and structure of a tree are contained in its seed, and therefore in its fruit, which exists for the sake of its seed. For this reason, a tree is known by its fruit ; a man by his works. There can, it is true, be no works without love and faith ; but neither can there be any love and faith without works. Doing includes loving and believing ; doing is loving and believing in act ; and unless loving and believing exist in act, they have no actual existence. This is the reason that so much stress is laid upon doing and keeping the commandments, and that loving and doing are so inseparable, that loving is doing, and doing is loving. "If a man love Me he will keep My words" (John xiv. 23). And on the other hand, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (ver. 21): or, as expressed by John in his first epistle, "This is the love of God that we keep His commandments" (v. 3). The self-same truth is here declared through John in the Apocalypse. They that do His commandments have a right to the tree of life. The tree of life is the grace of love—the Lord's love in the heart, or the Lord dwelling in the heart by love. Love is life ; and the commandments are the laws of life—not of the outward life only, as the Jews believed, but of the inward life also, as the Lord explained. The commandments of God are considered by some as the demands of justice, threatening death. They are rather the expressions of love, promising life. They teach us what to shun to escape death, and what to do to obtain life. But what is life ? It is love. Love contains heaven within itself, and there is no heaven without it. Those who obtain love obtain life ; and they obtain and preserve love by keeping the commandments. As the commandments are an expression and evidence of God's love to us, keeping the commandments is an expression and evidence of our love to Him. Loving without doing is a barren sentiment, which benefits neither its possessor nor others. It is a spring without verdure, a summer without flowers, an autumn without fruit. We express our love to God by acts of love to our neighbour. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Acts of love to the neighbour, done from the love of God, diffuse that love around us, and strengthen and confirm that love in our hearts.

Where there are no acts of love to the neighbour, there is not even an approach to the love of God. Only those who keep the commandments have a right to the tree of life, or, as it might be rendered, have power to obtain it. Those who do not keep the commandments cannot even enter in through the gates into the city. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). Only by keeping the commandments can we even acquire certain and saving knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel in general, and the doctrine of the Lord in particular, through which we enter into the church, as through the pearly gates of the holy city. "A good understanding have all they that do His commandments" (Ps. cxi. 10). "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). The way of the commandments is the way of truth and of life. Blessed are they that keep His commandments. They are within the walls of the New Jerusalem, which, being a city of holiness, is the abode of happiness. Thus as it was by disobedience that man forfeited his right to the tree of life, and closed against himself the gate of paradise, and brought the curse upon his own head; so it is by keeping the commandments that his right to the tree of life is restored, and the gates of the paradisiacal city are opened to him, and the long-lost blessing is again secured.

15. How different is the state, and how different must be the experience, of those who are without. *For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.* The difference between those who are within and those who are without is the difference between keeping and not keeping the commandments. These are among the evils forbidden in the ten commandments. They are included, with one exception, in the list in the previous chapter (ver. 8), of those classes of evil-doers who shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. No mention is there made of dogs, which here occupy the first place. Dogs are frequently, though not always, spoken of in Scripture in an evil sense. We are not to give that which is holy unto the dogs (Matt. vii. 6); yet the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table (Matt. xv. 27); and the very uncleanness of their appetite (2 Peter ii. 22) makes them lick and cleanse the sores of Lazarus (Luke xvi. 21). The dog is an emblem of the lower desires and appetites of our animal nature. Those who live to the gratification of their senses, especially of the grosser appetites, are the

dogs that are without. The sensual are the most directly opposed to the spiritual. "The sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19), are those who live after the flesh. But the sensual who belong to the church are more opposed to the spiritual than those who do not; as sin against the light of Revelation is more grievous than sin against the light of nature. In the two instances in which the dog occurs in the New Testament in a not unfavourable sense, is in reference to the Gentiles. The woman, whose daughter was cured for her saying that the dogs eat of the children's crumbs, was a Gentile; and Lazarus of the parable, whose sores the dogs licked, was a figure of the Gentiles. Even in reference to those within the church the dog has in one instance an implied favourable meaning. Isaiah says of the pastors of the church, "His watchmen are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand" (lvi. 10, 11). The symbolism of the dog is well exemplified in this instance. The senses were designed to be sentinels as well as ministers; to warn us of danger as well as to supply us with the means of life. In all cases they were intended to be servants and not masters. It is when the sensual nature rules over the spiritual that it is dumb and greedy; and silent, when it should warn against what is hurtful to the inner life; and insatiably self-indulgent, when it should watch over and defend the person and property of its master. It is sensual persons of this character who are designated dogs that are without. And they are the first in the roll of evil-doers to indicate the predominance of the sensual nature in all the others; for that which has the first place is first in all that follow. The other evil-doers we have already considered. There is one difference between the two cases. Instead of liars we have here whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. Some employ falsehood as a means; some love it as an end, and make it because they love it. The Devil is called the father of lies. "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." And those who are of their father the Devil will do the lusts of their father (John viii. 44). The Devil is another name for evil; and evil is the parent of falsehood. It is evil that loves and makes a lie.

16. We now come to the peroration of this sublime discourse, in which the deepest mysteries are revealed. *I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.* Jesus is the beginning and the end of this prophecy. He it was who sent the angel to show John these things, and to testify unto him these

things in the churches. The greatest and grandest of the things which Jesus testified by the angel were those respecting Himself. He is the central figure in the panoramic vision ; and, while all around is dark and troubled, and changes and passes away, He remains in the brightness of His glory and undisturbed repose, without variableness or shadow of turning, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, replacing vanished worlds by a new creation. But these were not change, and dissolution, and renewal of the outward creation, but of the church. It is in His relation to the church, not to the world, that Jesus now reveals and describes Himself. "I am the root and the offspring of David." As the root of David He was the Creator; as the offspring of David He was the Redeemer. In Him the Divine and the Human natures were united. This is the plain meaning of the title. But this is not its only meaning. It is not even its exact literal meaning. The union of the Divine and the Human in the person of Jesus does not mean the union in His person of the Creator and the creature. As born of the virgin Mary, Jesus was by natural descent the son of Abraham, the son of David, as well as the Son of God. By birth of the virgin His Humanity was like that of another man. But when He was glorified, His Humanity was no longer frail, or material, or even finite. All that He had originally derived from His human parent had passed away with His sufferings and death, and He arose in a Humanity that could neither suffer nor die. That Humanity is not only immortal, but alone hath immortality (1 Tim. vi. 16). Not only is it living, but it alone has life. "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John v. 26). Such being the nature of the Lord's Humanity, in what respect, and in what sense, is He the offspring of David? Not in the ordinary natural sense in which the child is the offspring of his Father. Jesus has one Father, that is, God. He never, even in the days of His flesh, acknowledged Himself to be the son of David, as He never acknowledged Himself to be the son of Mary. When He demanded of the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word" (Matt. xxii. 42-46). Christians answer this question by saying, Christ was both David's Lord and David's son; his Lord as to His Divine nature; his son as to His human nature. Most true it is that Jesus was and

is truly God and truly man. He was before David, and He was descended from David. But He was descended from David through His human mother. He had no human father. Here is the one great and essential difference between Jesus as a man and all other men. Our human nature does not consist in what we derive from one parent, but in what we inherit from both. The mother supplies but one part of our nature, and that the outer and lower. What we derive from our father is more interior, more powerful, more enduring. We are by nature our father's sons and daughters still more than we are our mother's. For the same reason, Jesus, in respect to His human nature, was, even from His birth, much more the son of His Father than of His mother. If in our case there is a difference between what we inherit from our father and what we inherit from our mother, immeasurably greater must have been the difference in His case. Both our parents are finite and sinful; one of His was infinite and all perfect. Many Christians think of Jesus as being the Son of God as to His Divine nature, "begotten from eternity." They do not think of His Humanity begotten in time as being the only begotten Son of God. Yet this is the teaching of the Scriptures. Jesus, as born of the virgin Mary, was the only begotten Son of God. That in Him which He derived by conception from His Divine Father was the Son of God. The Divinity which dwelt within Him was distinct from this, and was the Father Himself. There were in Him the pure Divine nature—the Father that dwelt within Him; the inner human nature, derived by conception from the Father, and in which the Father dwelt; and the outer human nature, taken from the mother, the flesh in which He dwelt, or tabernacled, among men, and through the veil of which they behold His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John i. 14). Jesus thought, and desired, and spoke, and acted both as the Son of God and as the Son of man. But there was this distinction, Jesus thought and desired *from* His inner Humanity but *in* His outer Humanity. The root of all His thoughts and desires was in His inner man, but they unfolded themselves in, and manifested themselves by, His outer man. This indeed is true of every human being. Thought and language are distinct. Thought belongs to the inner man, and language to the outer. But those who think, think in words; although thought must have originated language, as the means of thinking and as the vehicle of thought. But although the Lord's human nature acted according to the same law as ours acts, there was as much difference between His thinking and loving and ours, as there was between His paternal

humanity and ours. Of Him, in comparison with us, it may be said, "As the heaven is higher than the earth, so were His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts." He thought as a Divine man. His thoughts were thoughts of love and wisdom, love for the whole human race, wisdom as the power of love for their redemption and salvation.

It was because Jesus thought as a Divine man, that He never spoke of Himself as the son of Mary, and did not acknowledge Himself to be the son of David. The humanity which He inherited from Mary, and which was of the seed of David, was but a temporary habitation, a tabernacle that was to be taken down, a temple that was to be destroyed. The Humanity in which Jesus arose from the sepulchre was no longer material. It was spiritual, nay, Divine. In that Humanity John beheld Jesus in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and, overwhelmed by the glory of His person, fell down at His feet as dead. Can such a one be either the son of Mary or the son of David?

Yet Jesus here declares Himself to be the offspring of David. The Lord calls Himself the offspring, and even the root, of David, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit. David was a type of the Lord. He represented Him as a king. The Lord is a king as the ruler of His kingdom, in heaven, in the church, and in the hearts of men. It is in relation to His kingdom that Jesus now speaks of Himself as the root and the offspring of David. His love is the root of David, His truth is the offspring of David. When the Lord's love rules in the heart, and His truth rules in the understanding, Jesus is to us the root and the offspring of David. Love is the root of truth; truth is the offspring of love. Or what is the same, charity is the root of faith; faith is the offspring of charity.

Jesus, the root and the offspring of David, is also the bright and morning star. The star of Jacob and the star of Bethlehem both point to Jesus as the light of knowledge that precedes the light of intelligence and wisdom. The bright and morning star that heralds the sun and ushers in the dawn is highly appropriate here, where the New Dispensation in its beginning is the subject. It is to this event that Peter alludes when he says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter i. 19). The beginning of the new life in the believer is to him a new dispensation of light and love. A new day may have dawned upon the world, the morning star may have given

the bright promise of a coming day of general enlightenment, but not until the day dawn in our own minds, and the day-star arise in our own hearts, does the Coming of the Lord bring us the possession or even the hope of joy.

17. The message of Jesus by His angel is followed by this response and exhortation : *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* The Spirit and the bride signify heaven and the church. The Spirit speaks in and through those in whom He dwells. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. viii. 16, 26). Angels and men are alike indebted to the Spirit for every holy desire expressed in prayer. The bride, the Lamb’s wife, would not herself pray for the Coming of the Bridegroom, unless His indwelling Spirit gave her the desire to meet her beloved. Yet the Spirit and the bride are both named, not only to express the united prayer of the church in heaven and the church on earth, but also to express the united prayer of the understanding and the heart of every member of the church, militant and triumphant. The Spirit is the spirit of truth in the mind, and the bride is the affection of love in the heart. Where these are, the Lord’s testimony finds a faithful witness, and the promise of His Coming an earnest and fervent response. These spontaneously pray for the Lord’s Coming ; for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. There is another faculty and another class who are distinguished by it, that are exhorted to respond. “Let him that heareth say, Come.” To hear is to hearken and obey. But to hear and repeat what others say, is to receive and act on the authority of others rather than from their own conviction. This is characteristic of persons of an external character. In its application to one person it refers to the external or natural mind, which hears and responds to the spiritual mind. To the inner man belong will and understanding, or thought and affection ; and to the outer man speech and action.

But there is another important element in this operation. It is not only necessary for us to pray that the Lord will come to us, we must also go to Him. While the virgins waited for the Bridegroom, a cry was raised at midnight, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” So in the present case : while the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and he that heareth is exhorted to say, Come ; he that is athirst is invited to come, and whosoever will is assured that

he may take of the water of life freely. Reciprocation is an essential condition of salvation because it is an essential means of regeneration. We must pray for the Lord to come to us; but we must prepare ourselves to receive Him, and even go out to meet Him. This truth is generally admitted, but appears to be imperfectly understood. The statements of Scripture, unless carefully compared and combined so as to lead to one intelligent conclusion, may leave a confused impression on the mind. Salvation is spoken of as the work of God, as the work of man, and as the work of both. All these representations are true; but their equal truth is not clearly seen. The prevailing idea seems to be, that as God is omnipotent, and man is impotent, salvation rests much more with God than with man. Yet the truth is, and must be, that salvation, as an individual work, rests much more with man than with God. "The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus ii. 11). "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4); and is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter iii. 9). So far, then, as it depends on the will of "God our Saviour," all men will be saved. But in all these instances, our Saviour wills, not the end only, but the means. He wills that we should deny ourselves ungodly lusts; should come unto the knowledge of the truth; should come to repentance. It is not sufficient that God wills our salvation; we must will to be saved, and must do our part, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. ii. 12). Still it is true that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 13). Here comes in the difficulty. If our will and our acts are the work of God, where are our choice and power? Our natural life, happily, aids us in the solution of this seeming enigma. "In God we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). And yet we are free to direct our natural movements and regulate our natural life, as is admitted even by those who believe that we have no choice or control over our spiritual activities and states. There are, no doubt, mysteries in these, as in all the works and ways of God. However far our investigations may carry us, we see but in part. Wonders on wonders lie beyond our ken. This should make us modest, but need not make us sceptical. What we do know is sufficient to direct our faith. We know that God addresses us as creatures that are free to choose, and accountable to Him for the choice we make. Nor is there any insuperable difficulty in reconciling the all-sufficiency of God with the freedom of man. For has not the Creator Himself conferred the gift of freedom upon us? And must He not constantly preserve what He originally bestowed? The all-

sufficiency of God and the free-will of man are not therefore antagonistic ideas ; but both are equally reasonable and necessary truths. As there is but one source of life, there is but one source of good, that is, God. Without Him we can do nothing. We are branches of the Vine ; and only in virtue of our connection with it can we spiritually live and flourish and bear fruit. But it is in our choice to abide in the Vine or to be severed from it. “I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered” (John xv. 5, 6). Here is our high privilege and our deep responsibility. And while we abide in our living and omnipotent Saviour, ours is not a passive life. He works in us, but we must work with Him. His operation does not save us without our co-operation. Yet what is our co-operation but exerting the faculties He bestows, using the means He provides, and returning His gifts to Him by dispensing them to others ? What ground is there in this for self-righteousness and merit ? There is great cause for gratitude and love, for faithfulness and obedience, for meekness and lowliness of heart, but none for pride and vain-glory. The desire which draws us to Jesus He Himself inspires. He creates the thirst as well as supplies the water to quench it. And yet the desire is as much our own as if it had its first origin in the depths of our own consciousness. How marvellous, yet beneficent, is this seeming independence ! But while consciousness claims it for self, reason, enlightened by Revelation, ascribes it to God. Thus natural perception is balanced by spiritual faith ; and God has the glory while we have the benefit. The duty, and we may say the blessedness, of ascribing every good to the Lord, is revealed to us in the concluding words : “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” For this teaches that the gift may be taken, but cannot be purchased. It is offered without money and without price. It is a free gift, and must be received as such. It is undeserved, yet freely offered ; priceless, yet without price. There is indeed an opinion that it has been purchased for us, therefore free to the receiver, though not free from the Giver. This is an opinion that owes its existence to a dark age, and fades away before the light of God as it shines in the New Jerusalem. Jesus, who offers the gift, was Himself its original Possessor. What He came in the flesh to do, and now comes in the Spirit to confirm, was, not to enable God to give, but to enable men to take, the water of life freely. There was one way, it is true, in which the Creator increased His power in relation to men. He assumed and glorified

human nature, and brought Himself into a new and nearer relationship with His creatures. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). "And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (v. 9).

18, 19. The invitation to take the water of life freely is followed by a caution. *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* This is commonly understood to be a solemn warning against adding to or taking away from the completed canon of Scripture. The same warning was given by Moses (Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32). The testification in the Apocalypse refers, therefore, only to the Apocalypse itself. It is possible that from interested motives men may interpolate, mutilate, and corrupt the sacred text ; and some are known to have done so. Those who are guilty of such a crime incur a heavy responsibility. "Every word of God is pure : add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee" (Prov. xxx. 5, 6). Critics may, from errors of judgment, do injury to the text of Scripture ; but these are sins of ignorance, and incur no guilt. But in the warnings we have mentioned, the sacred writers refer, not so much to the preservation of the sacred text, as to the maintenance of the purity of its truths and the authority of its teaching. The Word has suffered much, and no part of it more than the Book of Revelation, from the labours of natural-minded expositors. The function of the expositor is to bring out the meaning of the sacred text. No expositor can do this fully, and only one inspired can do it faultlessly. Every one must to some extent both add and take away ; he must add something of his own, and take away something of the Lord's. Such a result is inseparable from the moral and intellectual imperfections of the best and wisest commentators. But there are others who, actuated by intellectual pride, or party spirit, or theological zeal, follow a vicious method, or exercise their own ingenuity, to bring out a meaning which is favourable to their own ideas. Such persons study the Word, not so much to learn its teaching as to confirm their own.

These, however, are but superficial and partial applications of the passage we are now considering. They include only certain classes and a comparatively limited number of men. Jesus testifies unto every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. To every hearer and reader of the words, therefore, the warning is given. The things of this book, which are to be preserved in their simplicity and integrity, are the great truths and principles which relate to our Christian faith and practice. Two great truths run like threads of gold through the whole texture of this prophecy. The Lord and the Law, or faith in Jesus Christ as the God and Saviour of men, and a life according to His commandments, appear in it in ever-varying forms. These are the two essential principles of the Christian religion, as in a less developed state they had been of the Jewish, and of every other, since the world began, for they are the pillars of the church and of heaven. They are the two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. To the Christian, as to the Jew, there is but one Lord. Israel's God is our God. That God is Jesus Christ. To love Him above all things, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is indeed the fulfilling of the law and the prophets. These two commandments, including the knowledge of who the Lord is, and who is our neighbour, are the sum of all religion; for they are the sum of all the laws of the spiritual life.

How do men add to and take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, in regard to its teaching on these two great subjects? How did the Jews act in respect to the same warning? So scrupulously did the Jewish scribes guard the text of their Scriptures, that they counted the words and letters of every book. Yet, while thus careful of the words, that they might obey the command neither to add nor take away, they so entirely neglected the spirit, that they made the commandments of none effect by their traditions. They took away from the law the force of its essential requirements, and burdened it with an oppressive load of useless ceremonials. With a laudable reverence and care for the sacred text, Christians, it is to be feared, have not been sufficiently careful to preserve the purity of its sacred truths. To these they have added, and from these they have taken away. According to the teaching of the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator and Redeemer of the world. Men have added to this simple and sublime truth by teaching the doctrine of a Tri-personal God, adding two other Persons to Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9). Some have also taken away from this truth by denying the Lord's Divinity, regarding Him

as an incarnate angel or a mere man. And even those who acknowledge His Divine nature have taken away from the truth respecting Him by denying the Divinity of His Humanity. In regard to the commandments and obedience to them, men have added to them in two different ways, which are seemingly opposite, but which are extremes that meet. Some regard the commandments as so easy of fulfilment, that the faithful Christian may do more than they require. Others believe that to fulfil the commandments is not only difficult but impossible. Once established by the authority of the church, men may hold these as theological opinions without incurring the guilt of adding or taking away. Opinions do not of themselves condemn. Yet all error, though not itself condemnatory, leads indirectly to condemnation. So far as it favours evil, error brings upon us the plagues of sin; so far as it undervalues good, it takes away our part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Truth is to be desired because, being pure, it leads to purity. "Every word of God is pure: add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee" (Prov. xxx. 5).

Although it is not easy to see how the adding to or taking away from the words of this book, or of the Scriptures generally, should be so great a crime and deserve so severe a punishment, it is easy to perceive how great and fatal an evil it is wilfully to depart, in faith and practice, from the essential truths which the book reveals, or which it presents anew to the church. The warning which is here given is addressed to the men of the church in our time as much as to those of a past age—"to every man that heareth." Not merely to those who hear, but to those who understand, and even to those who consent to what they hear and understand, is the warning given. To those who add to the words of the book, plagues are to be added; from those who take from them, their part is to be taken from the book of life. The plagues that are written in this book are, as we have seen, not the infliction of outward punishments, but the manifestation of inward states. And removal from the book of life is the result of the removal of the principles of the book of life from the mind and heart. No one is ever blotted out of the book of life till he has blotted its contents from the book of his own life. The whole contents of the book of life are comprehended in the two commandments of love to the Lord and love to the neighbour. When these are taken away out of the heart, our part is taken away out of the book of life. This fact is not less strikingly taught if we adopt what critics generally regard as the true reading—God shall take away his part from the tree of life. If those who keep

His commandments have a right to the tree of life, those who do not keep His commandments forfeit that right. In the literal sense the two evil acts and their threatened consequences seem to refer to different persons. In the spiritual sense they relate to two connected states in the same person. So far as we love and do evil, we cease to love and do good. So far as we add, so far we take away; so far as we bring upon ourselves the plagues of sin, so far we lose our part in the book or in the tree of life.

But there are two other calamities which befall those who take away from the words of the book. God takes away their part out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. The holy city is the church, the things written in this book are the truths of the church. When we speak of the church we mean the principles of the church; and when we speak of the truths of the church we mean, not matters of ecclesiastical belief, but matters of vital faith and practice. We are only in the church so far as the church is in us; only in its truths so far as they build us up into habitations of the living God. All these possessions may be lost, and are taken away from us by the very act of our taking away from the faith of Jesus Christ and the life of love and charity. Two dangers attend those who are of the New Church. Allowed to enter rationally into the truths of faith, they are in danger of being the victims of intellectual pride. And as others have erred in keeping the understanding in subjection to faith, so they are liable to run into the opposite error of keeping faith in subjection to the understanding; not duly reflecting that the Word is yea, yea; nay, nay; and that whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Thus are they in danger of adding to the pure and perfect truth of God. Required to keep the commandments as a condition, or rather as a means, of salvation, they are in danger of regarding the reward to be, not of grace but of work; thus their righteousness becomes meritorious: and merit is a thief that robs the Lord of His glory and deprives man of his salvation. How carefully, then, ought we to guard against these great evils!

20. Again and finally, *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly.* To this there is a response. *Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.* For Jesus speaks as the Bridegroom coming to the church as His Bride. The Lord expresses His will, the church her desire. The marriage of the Lamb has come; His wife hath made herself ready. Obstacles to their union have been gradually removed. Preparations for the nuptials are advancing. The Lord cannot make either His general or His individual Advent, except so far as there is a general or

individual desire and preparation for His Coming. Before the Lord's First Advent there was a general sense of want which no one of the existing systems could supply, a craving which none of them could satisfy. The Saviour had become the desire of all nations. The human mind had outgrown the means of its improvement. Such a state is not inconsistent with great moral degradation. The diseased spirit desires health, and craves the means of restoration even when living in violation of the laws of health. The same conditions preceded the Lord's Second Advent. The church had lost its purity, religion its power, the Scriptures their authority. They had lost in the dark ages what they did not recover with the restoration of learning. When a church has begun to decline it never can be restored to its original state; and even if doctrinally it could, it would be unsuited to the altered condition of the human mind. The mind requires and craves something more. It has outgrown the means of its advancement. Provision is therefore made for what its necessities require. Old things are done away, all things are made new. Yet the old supplies the germ of the new, for it contains it, as the seed contains the germ of the plant. But the new does not spring into life till the old falls into the ground and dies. The living power, aided by the showers and sunshine of returning spring, produces a new form, which in due time clothes itself with leaves and decks itself with flowers, as with the adornments of a bride; for these are the wedding garments of the virgin plant, as she turns herself to the sun, or as the sun turns her to himself. Things in which man is concerned are not made new without some new state or condition of mind, from which he can receive and return the new influence and the new gifts. Where there is no desire there can be no reception; where there is no reception there can be no return; where there is no return there can be no conjunction. The Lord loves the church, but the church must receive His love, and must return it to Him again. The Lord is ever coming to the church; but He cannot actually come till the church desires His coming. This coming is evidently represented in this chapter as progressive, as if the time were nearer and more near. Once before has it met with a responsive answer, but now the response is more instant and earnest. "Come, Lord Jesus," is the impassioned expression of the bride's desire for the promised coming of the Bridegroom. He is saluted, too, by the title and name more expressive of His love and goodness. This indicates corresponding graces in the responsive bride; for the church can only love the Lord as love and goodness, from His love and goodness in herself.

In the particular sense, which speaks of the Coming of the Lord to the regenerate, by His descent into their hearts and minds, we are to regard the Bridegroom and the bride as the graces of love and faith, the union of which constitutes the heavenly marriage. Love within and faith without is the first condition in relation to each other. Love comes directly through the inmost of the mind ; faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. As love in the heart is received and reciprocated by faith in the understanding, they gradually approach each other until they become united. Their union in the Christian mind is the truest covenant, and the beginning and ground of the Christian's union with the Lord, and of the Lord's union with the church. The whole is made up of its parts, and is such as the parts are. The church consists of love and wisdom, goodness and truth, charity and faith, not as abstract principles, but as graces of the heart and mind, and virtues of the Christian life. Of those whose minds are enriched with the graces, and whose lives are adorned with the virtues, of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, the church as a collective body consists, considered as it appears before God, whatever appearance it may present before men. The human mind is, therefore, the scene and the subject of all the transactions recorded in this book ; and not the least of the marriage of the Lamb. Here it is that He testifies, "Surely I come quickly ;" and here the response is given, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Love speaks within the heart, and the faith of love answers from the understanding.

21. With this blessed state of reciprocated love, which forms the essential condition of, and preparation for, the heavenly marriage, in which heaven consists, and from which its exalted uses and ineffable beatitudes spring, the apocalyptic vision closes. The benediction which is added, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*, is an effect as well as a conclusion, a deduction as well as a termination. The grace of our Lord is not His favour only but His love. It is His Divine Love brought near to us in His Divine Humanity. It is the grace of which the Psalmist speaks, when treating prophetically of the Lord's incarnation and His marriage with the church : "Thou art fairer than the children of men ; grace is poured into Thy lips : therefore God hath blessed thee for ever" (xlv. 2). The Son of Man, yet fairer than the children of men ; the recipient of Divine grace, yet its true Source ; the ever-blessed, yet the ever-blessing ; Jesus is the pattern of perfection, the Giver of good, the Dispenser of happiness. In Him all the Divine perfections dwell, because in Him all Divinity dwells, and dwells in a perfected, and therefore, Divine

Humanity, in which He is Immanuel, God with us. The grace of Jesus is the grace of God, but of God-Man, the grace of infinite and eternal Love, offered unto all men. It is the Lord's desire that His grace should be with us and in us. If not with the inspired penman, at least with all saints, we may devoutly and heartily say, *Amen.*

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